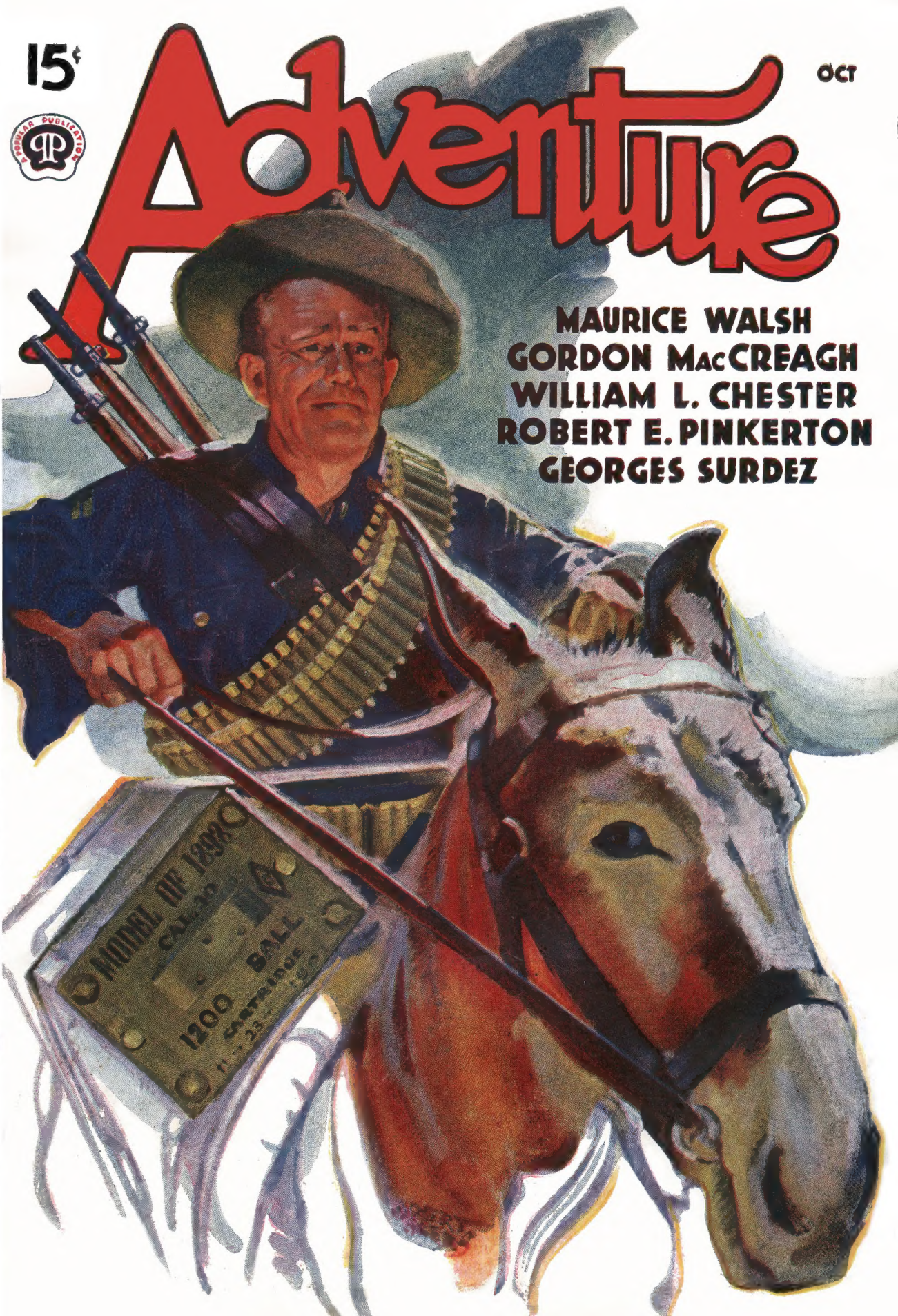
15¢

OCT

OCTOBER

Adventure

MAURICE WALSH
GORDON MacCREAGH
WILLIAM L. CHESTER
ROBERT E. PINKERTON
GEORGES SURDEZ



ADVENTURE

15 Cents

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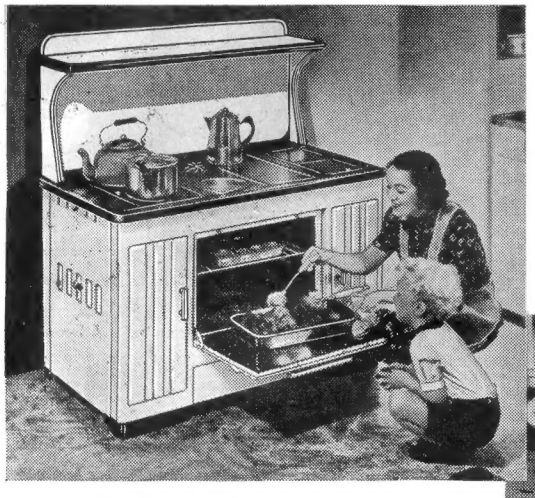
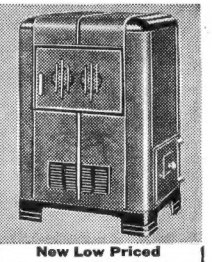


NEW Coal and Wood Ranges—NEW Gas Stoves
NEW Combination Gas, Coal and Wood Ranges
NEW Combination Electric, Coal and Wood Range
NEW Oil Heaters—NEW Coal and Wood Heaters
NEW Furnaces—FREE Furnace Plans

ALL ON EASY MONTHLY PAYMENTS

NEW FACTORY PRICES!



New Low Priced Coal and Wood Heaters

Mail Coupon Today for

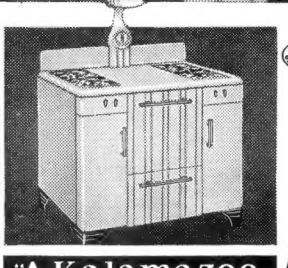
NEW FREE CATALOG

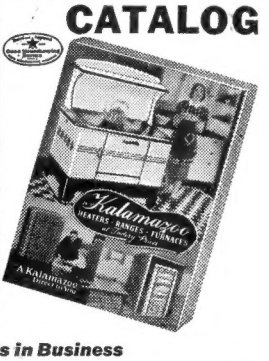
FREE Sensational NEW Stove Catalog! NEW FACTORY PRICES! NEW designs. NEW ideas. NEW features. Nearly 300 illustrations. *Handsome NEW color photographs of modern kitchens.* As newsy and colorful as a magazine. Just off the press—ready for you. *Mail coupon.*

Nearly 200 Styles, Sizes and Colors

You'll see nearly 200 styles, sizes and colors—174 Ranges, in all White, Tan and Ivory, Green and Ivory, Black and White, Gray and White, 14 different Heaters, 22 Furnaces. Stoves approved by Good Housekeeping Institute. Coal and Wood Ranges; Gas Stoves; Combination Gas, Coal and Wood Ranges; Combination Electric, Coal and Wood Ranges; Oil Ranges; Coal and Wood Heaters; Oil Heaters; Water Heaters; Washing Machines; Vacuum Cleaners; Furnaces. FREE furnace plans. *A bookful of bargains—more than you'll find in 20 big stores.*

All our Gas Stoves burn Bottled Gas, Manufactured or Natural Gas





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Use Your Credit—Terms as Little as 18¢ a Day

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24 Hour Shipments—Factory Guarantee

You'll be astounded at the new rapid Factory-to-You service (24 hour shipments). Order on 30 days trial. Satisfaction or money-back guarantee. You don't risk a cent.

Oven that "Floats in Flame"

Mail coupon! See the oven that "Floats in Flame." Read letters from national and state baking champions. See other exclusive Kalamazoo stove features in this marvelous NEW FREE CATALOG. Send for it today.

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Over 1,300,000 Satisfied Users praise Kalamazoo Quality. This is the 39th year of "A Kalamazoo Direct to You." Save at the FACTORY PRICE. Send for this FREE Catalog today. Mail coupon!

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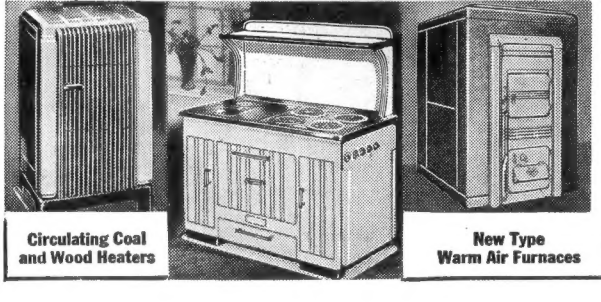
501 Rochester Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan
Warehouses: Utica, N. Y.; Reading, Penn.; Youngstown, Ohio; Springfield, Mass.

See this New Combination Electric, Coal and Wood Range



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☐ **Coal and Wood Ranges** ☐ **Coal and Wood Heaters**
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Name.....
(Print name plainly)

Address.....

City..... *State*.....

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NEW FORDS GIVEN AS A BONUS

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If you are married and willing to cooperate with your life partner in operating a Coffee Agency right in your own locality, send your name at once for full details about my plan—FREE.

It is now possible for married couples to make up to $60 in a single week if you can work harmoniously together. Wife handles the orders, keeps records, etc., while the husband delivers and collects. Steady, permanent business of one to two hundred customers can quickly be established if you follow the simple, proven plans that I send.

START EARNING AT ONCE

I'll send you everything you need—your complete outfit containing full-size packages of products, also printed forms, blanks, advertising literature, samples, etc., together with simple instructions for both the husband and wife, so you can start your earnings right away. Make as high as $45.00 your very first week.

Everybody uses Coffee, Tea, Spices, Flavoring Extracts, Baking Powder, Flour, Cocoa, Canned Goods and other foods every day. They MUST BUY these things to live. You simply take care of your regular customers right in your locality—just keep them supplied with the things they need. You handle all the money and pocket a big share of it for yourself. You keep all the profits—you don't divide up with anyone. Hundreds of housewives in many localities are waiting, right now, to be served with these nationally famous products.

I SEND EVERYTHING

Just as soon as I hear from you I will send you complete details—tell you all the inside workings of this nation-wide Coffee Agency Plan. I will explain just how to establish your customers; how to give them service and make good cash earnings. You can plan it so you give only 5 days a week to your business, collect your profits on Friday, and have all day Saturday and Sunday for vacation or rest. The plans I send you took years to perfect. You know they must be good because they have brought quick help to hundreds of other men and women, both married and single, who needed money.

FORD CARS GIVEN

Over and above the cash earnings you make I will give you a brand-new Ford Sedan as a bonus for producing. This is not a contest or a raffle. I offer a Ford Car—as an extra reward—to everyone who starts in this business.

YOU DON'T RISK A PENNY

You can start a Coffee Agency and make money the first week. You don't have to risk a cent of your own money. I absolutely guarantee this. No experience is needed. You use your home as headquarters. You can build your business on our capital. Full details of money making plans are free. Send your name today for the free book giving all inside facts, then you can decide. Don't waste a minute as you might lose this opportunity through unnecessary delay. ACT AT ONCE.

ALBERT MILLS

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Reported by Others

Clare C. Wellman, N. J., tried my plan and cleared $96.00 in a week. Hans Coordes, Nebr., made $27.95 in a day; $96.40 in a week. Norman Geisler, Mich., reported $33.00 profit for one day and as high as $129.00 in a single week. Ruby Hannen, a woman in West Virginia, stated that she made $17.00 in one day and $73.00 in a week. Wilbur Whitcomb, Ohio, reported $30.00 profit in a day and $146.00 in one week. I have scores of reports of exceptional earnings like these as evidence of the amazing possibilities of this money-making offer.

Free Offer COUPON

ALBERT MILLS, President
5369 Monmouth Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio

Send your free book telling how to start a local Coffee Agency in which a married couple (or single persons) can make up to $60.00 in a week. We will read it and then let you know if we want to accept this opportunity.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

(Please Print or Write Plainly)

Adventure

(Registered U. S. Patent Office)

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Cover by Hubert Rogers
Headings by I. B. Hazelton and Neil O'Keeffe
Howard V. L. Bloomfield, Editor

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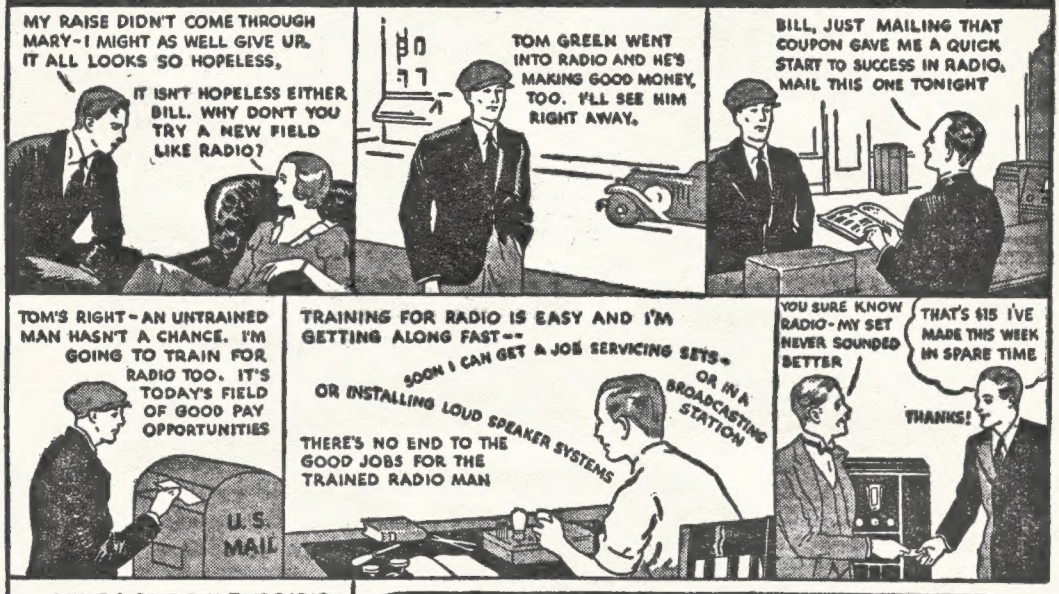
HE THOUGHT HE WAS LICKED-THEN A TIP GOT BILL A GOOD JOB!


MY RAISE DIDN'T COME THROUGH MARY-I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP. IT ALL LOOKS SO HOPELESS.
IT ISN'T HOPELESS EITHER BILL. WHY DON'T YOU TRY A NEW FIELD LIKE RADIO?
TOM GREEN WENT INTO RADIO AND HE'S MAKING GOOD MONEY, TOO. I'LL SEE HIM RIGHT AWAY.
BILL, JUST MAILING THAT COUPON GAVE ME A QUICK START TO SUCCESS IN RADIO. MAIL THIS ONE TONIGHT
TOM'S RIGHT-AN UNTRAINED MAN HASN'T A CHANCE. I'M GOING TO TRAIN FOR RADIO TOO. IT'S TODAY'S FIELD OF GOOD PAY OPPORTUNITIES
U.S. MAIL
TRAINING FOR RADIO IS EASY AND I'M GETTING ALONG FAST--
SOON I CAN GET A JOB SERVICING SETS-
OR INSTALLING LOUD SPEAKER SYSTEMS
OR IN A BROADCASTING STATION
THERE'S NO END TO THE GOOD JOBS FOR THE TRAINED RADIO MAN
YOU SURE KNOW RADIO-MY SET NEVER SOUNDED BETTER
THAT'S $15 I'VE MADE THIS WEEK IN SPARE TIME
THANKS!
I HAVE A GOOD FULL TIME RADIO JOB NOW--AND A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD IN RADIO
OH BILL, IT'S WONDERFUL YOU'VE GONE AHEAD SO FAST IN RADIO.

I'LL TRAIN YOU AT HOME
In Your Spare Time For A GOOD RADIO JOB

Many Radio Experts Make $30, $50, $75 a Week

Do you want to make more money? Broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, station managers and pay up to $5,000 a year. Fixing Radio sets in spare time pays as much as $200 to $500 a year—full time repair jobs pay as much as $30, $50, $75 a week. Many Radio Experts open full or part time Radio businesses. Radio manufacturers and jobbers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, paying up to $6,000 a year. Automobile, police, aviation, commercial Radio, loud speaker systems offer good opportunities now and for the future. Television promises many good jobs soon. Men I trained have good jobs in these branches of Radio.

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The day you enroll I start sending Extra Money Job Sheets showing how to do Radio repair jobs. Throughout your training I send plans and ideas that made good spare time money—$200 to $500 a year—for hundreds. I send Special Radio Equipment to conduct experiments, build circuits, get practical experience. I ALSO GIVE YOU A MODERN, PROFESSIONAL ALL-WAVE, ALL-PURPOSE RADIO SET SERVICING INSTRUMENT TO HELP FIX SETS QUICKER—SAVE TIME, MAKE MORE MONEY.

J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute
Established 1914

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Find Out What Radio Offers You

Mail the coupon now for "Rich Rewards in Radio." It's free to any fellow over 16 years old. It points out Radio's spare time and full time opportunities, also those coming in Television; tells about my Training in Radio and Television; shows letters from men I trained, telling what they are doing and earning; shows my Money Back Agreement. MAIL COUPON in an envelope, or paste on a postcard—NOW!

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 8KS9
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

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HERE'S PROOF THAT MY TRAINING PAYS

Broadcast Operator after Twenty Lessons

"When I had completed the first twenty lessons I had obtained my license as Radio Broadcast Operator and immediately joined the staff of WMPC, where I am now chief operator." —HOLLIS F. HAYES, 85 Madison St., Lapeer, Mich.

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"I am making from $10 to $25 a week in spare time while still holding my regular job as a machinist. I owe my success to N. R. I."—WM. F. RUPP, 208 W. Front St., West Conshohocken, Pa.

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"After completing the N. R. I. Course I became Radio Editor of the Buffalo Courier. Later I started a Radio Service business of my own, and have averaged over $3,500 a year." —T. J. TELAAK, 657 Broadway, Buffalo, N. Y.

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 8KS9
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send "Rich Rewards in Radio," which points out the opportunities in Radio and explains your 50-50 method of training men at home to become Radio Experts. (Please Write Plainly.)

NAME.....AGE.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....STATE.....

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FOR EVERY OCCASION!

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Please send me C.O.D. at once.....copies of "A SPEECH FOR EVERY OCCASION" $2.00 ea. I will pay postman—cost plus a few cents postage.

Name .....

Address .....

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AMAZING INVENTION—New Radiant Heater. Burns 96% air. Makes its own gas. No piping. No installation. Gives roomful of clean, healthful, penetrating heat, like sunshine, for 1½ cents an hour. Hotter than gas or electricity, at 1-10th the cost. Easy to light and operate. No smoke. No soot or ashes. No odor. Portable—carry it anywhere. Low priced. Guaranteed.

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Liberal Offer. Try it 30 days at our expense. Write at once for special, introductory, low-price offer and no-risk trial opportunity. No obligation. Send today.

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For several years, Diesel engines have been replacing steam and gasoline engines in power plants, motor trucks and busses, locomotives, ships, tractors, dredges, pumps, etc. And now the first Diesel-powered passenger car is on the market. Our home-study course offers you a real opportunity to prepare for a worth-while position in this new field. Write TODAY for full information. No obligation.

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Secret Service Operator No. 38 is on the job! Running down dangerous Counterfeit Gang. Telltale finger prints in murdered girl's room.

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LOST TRAILS

Hans A. Schnell, 253 Cumberland St., Brooklyn, wants word of his brother Fred Schnell, last known address Middlesex Hospital, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Gilbert Thompson, about 43, Swede, former member of Medical Corps 89th Division during 1917-1918. Last heard of he was living in Cloquet, Minn., in 1925. Anyone knowing of him please write to James C. McKinney, CO. 3855 C.C.C., Groveland, Calif.

Anyone who was in the 4th Casual Company, Camp Lewis, Washington, please write to Clarence Parker, Gerber, California.

James P. FitzGerald, serving about the *U.S.S. West Virginia* in 1933, write to K. Downes, 231 George St., Peterboro, Canada.

Information desired regarding James Conroy Kennedy, originally from Wisconsin, last heard from in 1929 while working on construction project near Barranquilla, Colombia, S.A.—A. Kennedy, 2209 Barnard St., Savannah, Ga.

Wanted: Address of Alfred Willy, who was at Los Zanos, Philippine Islands, in 1915, Alfred W. Southwick, 78 Burnside Avenue, Newport, R. I.

Emile Cuschina, of San Jose, California, get in touch with old friend Bill Gianella, Marysville, Calif.

Wanted—word from Otto Meyne, formerly Battery D, 7th Field Artillery, Madison Barracks, N. Y. Nevin Hayes, 1012 Wood St., Wilkinsburg, Pa.

John V. Gatton, now 27, last heard from leaving Joplin, Mo., for New Orleans, in 1931. Notify mother, Mrs. Ida Gatton, Danvers, Montana.

Word wanted of Jack Oliver Hanlon, who left his home in Seattle, Wash, Oct. 23, 1932, and was a regular reader of Adventure. Notify his mother, Mrs. W. F. Hanlon, 2321 Fairview No., Seattle, Wash.

I would like to get in touch with Edwin P. Ford, ex-marine, *U.S.S. New Mexico.* Believe him to be in Baltimore, Maryland. H. C. Price, Route 1, Box 380, Modesto, California.

Duane William Peterson, was last heard from in Fort Bayard, New Mexico. Was formerly with Coast Artillery Corps—7th, Fort Scott, San Francisco. Mrs. Justina Rennie Cranz, 6298 Del Valle Drive, Los Angeles, California, wishes words of him.

OFFER TO YOUNG MEN

Who Hanker to Smoke a Pipe

MEN: Complete smoking pleasure comes only from smoking fine tobacco, and starting under ideal conditions. Through this unusual offer we are introducing to you pipe smoking at its best.

Here's Our Offer

First: Trial Packets of each of the three styles of world-famous Edgeworth, wrapped in heavy foil. Edgeworth, famous for more than 35 years, has always contained only the finest tobacco leaf on the market. We know that you cannot make good tobacco from cheap tobacco leaf any more than you can get the pleasure of choicest porterhouse steak for a rump steak price. We gladly pay premium prices to give you a finer smoke. This costly leaf is then manufactured to the high Edgeworth standard —better tobacco, made to smoke cooler, means *no tongue bite* and permits you to enjoy fully its enhanced flavor, greater mildness and richer aroma.

Second: A handsome *Signature* Pipe (*made by Linkman*) that has been mechanically pre-smoked (already "Broken In") with genuine Edgeworth. It's sweet and gentle from the start. Then to give you an added interest in this pipe, we engrave your *own personal signature* in gold color on the stem. No pipe so personal.

Edgeworth always carries a written guarantee of satisfaction, or money refunded. Edgeworth is on sale everywhere in convenient pocket tins of 15¢.

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LARUS & BRO. Co., Dept. K., Richmond, Va.

SIGNATURE **A. M. M.**

Enclosed please find $1.00 for your Edgeworth Sampler Kit . . . Opposite is my signature to *engrave* on the stem of the pipe. (Please *print* clearly your name and address below.)

Please write your normal signature clearly within exact space allotted

Name.....*Address*.....

City.....*State*.....

PLEASE SEND US YOUR DEALER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

Dealer's Name.....*Address*.....

City.....*State*.....

WHEN THE BAMBOOS BURN

A fact article

By ALBERT W. TOLMAN

FIVE olive-skinned Burmans in a round-bottomed canoe of swamp mahogany on a narrow clear-green creek, snaking through the Irrawaddy delta, are returning from Rangoon from selling Shway Bang, the rice merchant, a few jute sacks of choice paddy. It is a hot March noon in the heart of the dry season. The stream winds between close walls of tall bamboos, their white sear leaves rustling in the strong northwest wind like gigantic grass blades.

The Burmans have just finished their dinner of boiled rice and curry, liberally seasoned with Cayenne pepper, and cooked by Moung Daw in an earthen *chatty* over a charcoal fire between three lumps of clay from the low muddy bank. Manny Gyi (the big one) and Manny Gale (the little one) are paddling leisurely; Po Toke swings the steering oar, puffing a huge cheroot. Nga Kank lies on a rug under the stern shelter, smoking his hubble-bubble pipe. They laugh and chatter, showing betel-blackened teeth.

Down the wind drifts a faint rattle, like distant rifle-fire. The talk and laughter stop suddenly; all are alert, listening. Louder, nearer, sound the popping detonations. There is a brief excited discussion, then action. Moung Daw and Nga Kank seize the spare paddles; four blades splash furiously, as the canoe leaps forward, speeding toward safety and the green jungle-clad uplands a half mile to windward.

Why such mad haste? Far north two tall bamboos, coated with flinty silica, have been rubbing together high in air under the strong wind. After hours of friction, a curling smoke-wisp, a live coal, a sudden flame. Gale-fanned, it races across the tossing dry tops, until miles are ablaze, burning downward. A rattle, a roar, as of myriad machine-guns. Every bamboo joint is a tight cylinder of moist air, which the outside heat turns to steam, causing the sections to burst with violent explosions. Blazing stems shoot rocketlike, broadcasting the conflagration.

The Burmans paddle for life. Nearer, louder, rages the bombardment. Around a bend a long vista opens between the close walls, and a red tongue of clear fire licks across the water.

To keep on means suicide. On land they would roast alive in the dense growth; afloat, be suffocated, or drown and be eaten by crocodiles. They have but one chance to escape.

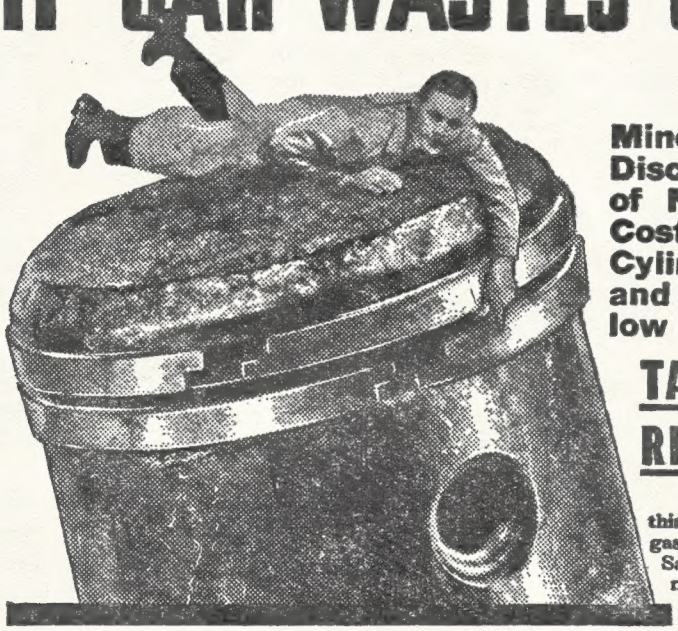
Paddling close ashore, the five leap out, and submerge their canoe by heaping mud aboard. Hands and "dahs" (Burman all-around chopping knives or machetes) frantically scoop up clay and sedge, and build a wall before the overhanging bank.

Meanwhile to windward reverberate unceasing detonations, mingled with thunderous crashes like artillery fire. Overhead, the sky bursts into a blaze, as flame sweeps across the nodding crests, leaps the stream, and spreads far and wide. Joints of burning bamboo dart through a shower of feathery ashes to plunge hissing into the green flood, while a furnace heat smites down from the fiery tornado above.

Not a minute too soon the wall's top touches the projecting bank. With a crackling roar a smoky yellow wave surges over the imperilled Burmans, as they dive thankfully in behind their barricade and plaster up the open ends. Half submerged behind that slimy wall, they must crouch for hours in the thick hot gloom, repelling with their dahs any too inquisitive crocodiles.

When the fire has burned itself out, and the smoky air cooled enough to be endurable, Moung Daw, Manny Gyi, Manny Gale, Po Toke and Nga Kank claw the half-baked mud aside, crawl out, raise and empty their canoe, and resume their journey—if they are lucky enough. Along these streams have occurred tragedies of which only the crocodiles could tell!

DON'T BUY RINGS *or* REBORE IF CAR WASTES OIL *and* GAS



Miner's Amazing Mineral Discovery Saves Up to 95% of New Ring and Rebore Costs—If Worn Rings and Cylinders are Wasting Oil and Gas Send Coupon Below for FREE SAMPLE

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NORTH OF THE BORDER

A Novelette

By ROBERT E. PINKERTON

THE tall man pumped a bucket of water and carried it to his horse. He had rubbed the animal thoroughly with twists of hay and now he washed its back.

"We don't waste water hereabouts," the stableman growled.

"Don't calculate I'm wasting it."

"I'm only telling you, stranger. There's even some as thinks blood is worth less'n water. A lot less."

The horse rippled his skin gratefully. His owner turned.

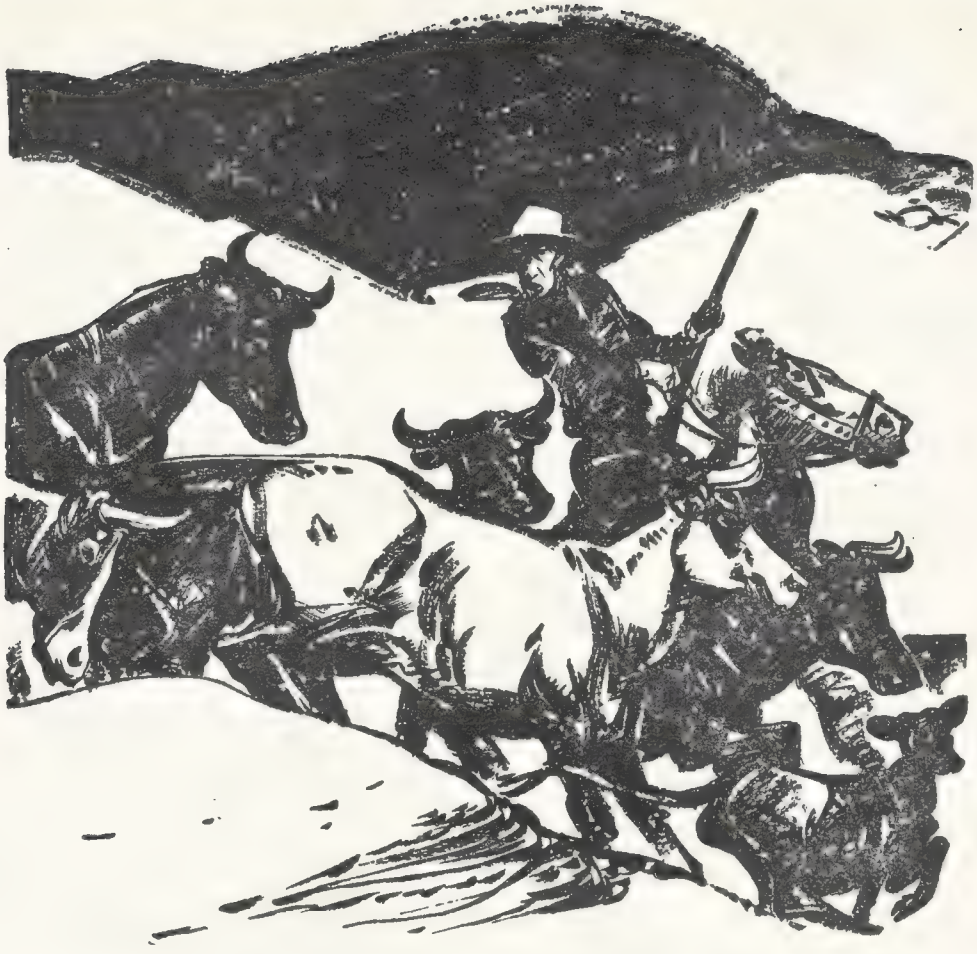
"Cows have to drink," he said.

"Depends on who owns the cows."

The tall man looked at the squat figure.

"Does seem dry," he ventured.

"So dry it's crackin'," the stableman said.



"They're runnin' your cows into Mexico!"

The stranger studied the scowl on the other's broad face. It was an unaccustomed scowl, producing new wrinkles.

"I'm only riding through," he said. "Will they begrudge me the water in some coffee?"

"Not if you've got a fresh horse tied outside the Chink's."

"Thanks." The tall man returned to his task.

He did not look up when hoofs clattered behind him, when saddle leather creaked and high heels struck the hard clay. He did wheel swiftly when he heard a soft voice.

"We put water on the inside of a horse."

The tall man started. He had never seen a woman in anything except a skirt, and he had seen few women so attractive as this girl. Somehow the overalls and chaps added poise to the rounded figure and complemented the steadiness of friendly brown eyes.

"I was wonderin' if Star's hide might leak, should we get rain," he said as he swept off his hat.

The brown eyes twinkled.

"You always let a horse be that much trouble?" she asked.

"Star is more friend than horse."

The animal nudged his owner and reached his nose toward the girl. She took off a glove and rubbed the velvet muzzle.

The stableman hurried up and took her mount.

"Fine day, Miss Madge," he greeted.

"Fine, Limpy," she smiled.

"Miss Madge," the tall man said, "I

won't take even a small advantage. My name is Jones, Just Jones."

"Meanin' there's no more of it?"

"If you want it all, it's Just Another Jones."

"You have older brothers," she said.

"Which is how my old man felt."

The girl laughed delightedly. "Denton is the rest of my name. Please put your hat on. You'll get sunstroke."

"Miss Madge," and Just Jones bowed, "that would be no more than the tap of a feather now."

"Thank you," she said, suddenly quiet. "Men here have forgotten how to make nice speeches. They don't laugh any more. They don't even smile."

She walked away, toward the one store on Waddytown's one street. Just Jones watched her and then resumed his grooming.

"What you 'spect is botherin' her, Star hoss?" he whispered. "A nice girl, and she's worried."

He finished his task and went up the street. Argument sounded in a saloon and he entered. Half a dozen cowboys were engaged in heated discussion. Just Jones listened.

"Face a man square and he's got twice as much to hit."

"You get hit any place on the side, it's enough."

"Heart's as thick one way as another."

"So's the backbone."

"Thin man don't offer much sideways."

"Same's as a deer. Center on the shoulder and you've got a chance at heart, lungs and backbone."

"Can't draw or shoot fast, edgewise to a man."

"Bullet's marked for you, it finds you."

They were young and eager. Just Jones saw another young man leaning against the bar, beyond the group. His face was sober but his eyes danced with amusement. Jones liked the light in those eyes, and the strong, homely features. He liked the features even better when at last they twisted askew in a grin.

One of the debaters saw the grin.

"How you figure it, Sanders?" he demanded.

"I never worked out any opinion," Sanders drawled. "Cows take all my time."

"You'd better start thinkin' about it," one said.

The cold tone brought instant silence. Just Jones felt his muscles respond to the tension.

Only Sanders seemed unaware of strain. He leaned easily against the bar, an old hat shoved back from tawny curls. He did not wear belt or gun. His overalls were frayed, his shirt faded, his boots thin and wrinkled.

"It's this way," Sanders said. "You boys get forty a month and board. You buy shells and punch holes in every tin can you see. I can't afford even the can."

He grinned good naturedly. One of the young punchers laughed but the others were being hard.

Just Jones smiled as he watched them. Scarcely more than kids, the newness not worn off their gun belts, they were devoting themselves seriously to the task of being reckless men of the range.

Now the oldest stepped forward.

"Buy some shells, Sanders," he snarled. "Come into town naked like this again and we'll use boots on you."

Sanders continued to smile, though his eyes glinted.

"Shouldn't wonder but what you would, Jed," he said. "And the whole six might be able to do it."

"Want to start it now, eh?" Jed demanded.

Sanders looked them over. He was cool, deliberate.

"I'm not buying any shells," he said.

JUST JONES saw the hands of two boys drop to their guns, and he knew range youth.

"Gentlemen—" His voice broke the stillness—"I've been interested in this argument. Could I add my bit?"

"This argument is our affair," Jed, the leader, said.

"Nobody's got exclusive rights to figurin' on how to dodge a bullet. And I think you boys missed the bedrock prin-

ciples of a real lowdown gun fight."

They looked at him now. Their resentment was tinged with curiosity. Just Jones took quick advantage.

"Havin' dodged a lot o' lead in my time, besides stoppin' some, I've worked out a theory that's kept me alive," he said. "And I ain't no hog about ideas."

He was friendly, perfectly at ease.

"What is this idea?" Jed asked.

Just Jones clinked a gold coin on the bar.

"I reveal secrets only to friends," he said. "I drink only with friends. I ask you to drink with Just Jones."

Some grinned a bit sheepishly as they lined up. All watched him with respect. Just Jones waved the bartender to Sanders at the end. Glasses were filled.

Jones began to talk, easily, confidently. He related astounding incidents as if they were but driblets from a huge store. He mentioned names they all knew, gave eye witness accounts of battles famous in the West. He had their eyes popping out.

He staged realistic scenes of battles, using his listeners as actors. Thus, when he bought the second drink, he had worked through until he was standing beside Sanders.

"You ain't told us this notion that's kept you alive," protested a youth of no more than seventeen.

Amusement and irritation mingled in Jones' expression.

"Son," he drawled, "I ain't done anything else. I've showed you the man stays alive who gets his gun out first and shoots straight after he does."

Just Jones was facing them, smiling, relaxed, swaying forward a bit on his toes. Nothing warned of the flash of his right hand, of the big revolver sweeping the group.

Some jerked backward. One took a step as if to run. All stared their amazement.

"Gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention," Just Jones said. "School's out. Run along home."

They went, in silence, the astonished look still in their eyes.

"I never seen greased lightning outside the sky before," the stunned bartender said, and he set out a bottle.

"Thanks," Just Jones grinned. "But liquor's poor elbow oil. And my young friend and me's takin' a pasear."

"I'm thanking you, sir," Sanders said as they went out the door. "They'd have kicked some ribs in. And I've got to keep on my feet."

"You've homesteaded water and started a small spread," Just Jones remarked.

"Which is the only subject of conversation hereabouts."

"I ain't heard any talk. Those boys work for a big outfit. They're tryin' to ride you out."

"That ain't talked about so much."

"There's several big spreads, several of you who grabbed water," Jones continued. "All the makin's of a cattle war. Only the war don't start."

Sanders looked at him with admiration.

"Mr. Jones, I sure would like to have you around!" he exclaimed. "Something is queer. I ain't—"

He broke off. Madge Denton had stepped out of the store. Sanders seemed to forget Just Jones, forget everything else, as he started toward her.

Madge saw him coming.

"Wade!" she cried, and there could be no mistaking the look in her eyes.

Just Jones saw it, and smiled. He continued to smile as Wade Sanders and Madge Denton walked down the street together.

JUST JONES returned to the saloon.

"With big spreads hereabouts, your bread's buttered pretty thick on one side," he remarked absently.

"I've et bread without butter," the bartender said.

"I figured so. Who those boys work for?"

"Jim Cope."

"Fine kids. Beginnin' to feel their oats. And the trail forks just ahead of them."

The bartender did not comment. Jones rolled a cigarette.

"And Wade Sanders is in a jam," he said. "Tryin' to get a brand started and wantin' to get married at the same time."

The bartender looked at Jones narrowly.

"I saw you ride into town only an hour ago," he said.

"She's got a nice smile," Just Jones said. "Worried, though, 'bout something."

"Why not? Her dad owns the biggest spread of all."

Just Jones dropped his cigarette. The bartender grinned.

"You're learnin' too fast," he said.

"Or maybe not fast enough," Just Jones added with the hint of a question in his voice.

The bartender wiped the bar carefully. He did not look up when he spoke.

"Me, I'm dishin' out red-eye. It seems to be my sole aim in life. I'm not like the wrangler at the stable. He sometimes get onsatisfied with his job."

Just Jones rolled another cigarette.

"Thanks," he said. "Time to feed my horse."

As he strolled up the street he saw two horsemen ride away. They rode slowly, close together. Their heads were turned toward each other. When they swung westward, Jones saw that one was a girl.

Limpy, the stableman, was watching the pair too. He scarcely noticed Just Jones, which gave Jones time for observation. Overalls, though worn, did not show saddle marks. Boots of good quality had known stirrups. The young face should have been good natured but was marred by a frown.

"I'm buying oats for my Star hoss," Just Jones said.

Limpy brought a measure of grain.

"Wade Sanders has got the makin's of a good man," Jones commented.

"Wade's a good man now," Limpy retorted.

"Think he's good enough?"

The stableman whirled angrily but sobered when he caught the steady look in the stranger's eyes.

"The best man I ever saw couldn't lift a railroad engine if it happened to run onto his foot," Jones said.

"Wade told me you edged him out o' trouble. Only he couldn't figure why."

"Those waddies was young," Jones explained. "Full o' vinegar and beans and ain't steadied down yet. They might 'a' been sorry afterwards."

Limpy eyed him with suspicion. Jones squatted on his right heel and did not seem inclined to talk further.

"And it might 'a' been a slick play o' yourn," Limpy said coldly. "Mister, you've got all the earmarks of a gun fighter that's come because he's been sent for."

"Maybe so," Jones admitted.

"Big spreads generally hire tough hombres when a war's on. I been on the watch and spotted you first off."

"You're smart."

"And I don't mind sayin' that any man who hires out his gun is ten grades lower'n a rustler."

Just Jones stood up. Limpy held his ground.

"You got a horse?" Jones asked.

"Comes in every night," and the stableman pointed to a grazing animal.

"But you don't ride, though you'd rather ride than eat. You'd sooner punch cows than sell oats. You might be a man if somebody kicked you in the pants and started you at it."

Limpy flushed, but his eyes did not waver.

"Now tell me about Jim Cope," Jones snapped.

"I knew it was Cope that sent for you!" Limpy snorted.

"Never heard of him till ten minutes ago. Is it his cows that can't find water?"

"To hear him tell it."

"How about Denton's?" Jones asked.

"The whole range is dry."

"How many big spreads are there?"

"Just the Lazy S and Denton's. Eastern outfit bought the Lazy S and Cope is supposed to be manager."

Limpy was sullen but Jones persisted.

"Wade Sanders got the only small outfit?" he asked.

"It's been free range since the beginning. Grant Denton and the Lazy S shared it. Even when Wade filed on Big Springs in the breaks, nobody thought much about it. Then three hombres came in to onct and grabbed water. And we ain't had any rain."

"But nothing happens," Just Jones commented.

"They're crowdin' Wade," Limpy said.

"Tried to shove some cows through to his water and feed."

JONES was watching three riders at the other end of the street. They came slowly, were well spaced, sat their saddles with a peculiar alertness. At the store the trio dismounted separately, looked around, entered.

"Like they expected something," Jones remarked.

"They're the ones that homesteaded water on the north side of the valley," Limpy offered.

"In some ways, you ain't so smart," Just Jones said, and he strolled up the street.

When he entered the store he appeared to be interested only in his purchases. But while he waited for change he noted several things about the three men who had preceded him.

Each wore a gun and plenty of cartridges in the belt. One placed his change in a well filled buckskin bag. They were eating canned salmon and crackers.

None of the trio spoke. They sat facing the door. Their faces were hard and controlled. When the storekeeper cracked a joke they did not laugh or even seem to hear.

And though they were intent on their meal, Just Jones knew that no detail of his own appearance escaped them.

Jones took his purchases to the stable, tied them in his saddle roll and walked back to the saloon.

Two men were at the bar. One was big, with a chest so wide his vest hung from the shoulders like a bolero. His face was broad, too, with steady clear eyes under a massive forehead.

His companion was long and thin and his face, built on the same order, sprouted a droopy mustache.

"Have another, Cope?" the thin man asked.

Just Jones continued to stare at a whisky calendar on the wall. He did not turn until he heard bottle touch glass, and then a swift glance swept the big man.

Jim Cope was waiting for that glance. He knew about Just Jones, about the argument of the six kid punchers, about Wade Sanders. Jones saw instantly that Cope knew.

So Just Jones smiled. It was a quick, disarming, friendly smile accompanied by a courteous bow. For a long second, Jim Cope hesitated.

"Won't you join us, stranger?" he asked.

Jones introduced himself. The tall thin man, he learned, was Matt Rowley. They talked. Just Jones was light hearted. He told a story or two.

Jim Cope was appreciative. His big chest pumped out great blasts of laughter. His clear eyes remained unsecretive. For all Jones could see, Cope was a successful cowman with no more than a cowman's usual cares. Except that first searching glance.

Even when the three homesteaders came in, Jim Cope's manner did not change. Matt Rowley scowled, and Just Jones heard him mutter curses as he shifted his gun belt.

The bartender was tense and watchful. But nothing happened. That was the strange part of this affair, Just Jones thought. Nothing happened, even when a match was brought close to a fuse.

After a time Just Jones excused himself and went to the Chink's for supper. It was dark when he finished and walked to the stable. Three horses still stood outside the store, and a rifle was in the boot of each saddle. Limpy was sitting on the feed box.

"How do I get to the Denton place?" Jones asked.

"Ride with Matt Rowley," Limpy answered sullenly. "He's Grant Denton's foreman."

"So? And how do I find Wade Sanders?"

"You goin' there? After seein' Jim Cope?"

Limpy was on his feet, suddenly intent.

"It sounds like I'm on my way," Just Jones said carelessly.

"Follow the road west about ten miles," Limpy said. "Where it turns north to Denton's head straight south."

Jones saddled, paid his bill. As he mounted he saw Limpy running back into the stable.

After a mile, Just Jones turned off the

road. It had been fairly straight on the flat and he took a line on a star. Half a mile south he turned west again, keeping the star before him. He did not ride fast. Every little while he stopped to listen.

Twice he was rewarded. Soon he heard galloping horses, two or three, on the road. A bit later more horsemen passed. Again Jones could not determine whether there were two or three. Both parties were heading west.

An hour from town Star found a trail leading south, and Jones paralleled it. Several miles ahead he could see the line of the mesa top. In the breaks, the broken wall of this table-land, was where Wade Sanders had homesteaded precious water.

Just Jones proceeded cautiously now. He stopped often. The desert night was unbelievably still.

Star lifted his head. Just Jones did not at once catch the low rumble. When he did he knew instantly what it meant. Thirsty cattle were hunting water.

Jones went on. The cattle were moving south too. After half an hour the broken, spurred edge of the mesa began to take shape against the velvet sky.

The cattle were closer now, smelling water, lowing. Jones heard an occasional shout.

Shots sounded ahead. Flashes stabbed skyward. Yells broke out to Jones' right. Thunder of hoofs came through ground and air. Star, given rein, broke into a lope.

More shots sounded ahead, rifle shots now. The fire flashed horizontally. Revolvers answered. Hoofs thundered.

Just Jones saw rushing cattle on his right. Ahead loomed the precipitous wall of the escarpment. A rider dashed past.

"This enough, Jed?" he called.

A touch of the rein and Star swung to the left. Jones stopped in the black shadows at the base of the cliff.

Sound of the running cattle dwindled, died away. The thirsty animals were inside the canyon now. Three horsemen followed in a close group, passing close to Jones.

Voices sounded outside the canyon. A revolver was fired skyward. A burst of horses' hoofs swept away into the north, whence the cattle had come. Across the canyon a rifle flashed. Then quiet came.

CHAPTER II

NIGHT RAID

JUST JONES waited in the black shadow. He stood alertly at Star's head, ready to stifle a whinny.

After half an hour a square of light appeared on the other side of the canyon. Jones mounted and rode toward it. Star whinnied now, and the light went out. Jones rode on until a voice came from the blackness ahead.

"I've got you skylighted."

"Fair enough," Just Jones said. "You Wade Sanders?"

"Who are you?"

Jones gave his name, and continued to ride forward. When he could dimly see two figures he laughed.

"Thought Limpy'd be here ahead o' me. Damage complete?"

"Complete," Wade Sanders answered.

"Keep him covered!" Limpy whispered excitedly. "He's workin' for Jim Cope."

Just Jones ignored that. He dismounted and faced the pair in the darkness.

"Something seems to have happened at last," he said.

"Plenty," Wade agreed.

"Mind if I stick around?"

"Why?"

"Cussedness mostly. Hate to see a big man pickin' on a little one. Curiosity, too."

"How you mean?" Wade demanded.

"The whole set-up's queer."

"I've got water. They needed it. Now they've come and taken it. That's simple."

The budding cowman's tone was bitter. Limpy cursed. He kept his rifle ready.

"Let's go where we can see," Jones suggested. "Limpy can keep a better eye on me."

They went inside a cabin. Wade lighted a lamp. Just Jones sat at a table. He sat close to it, both elbows on top, and looked at Wade Sanders.

Jones had seen the young cowman

once, and briefly, when he was in a tough spot. Wade had grinned then, even as he expected a beating, or worse. He did not grin now when he was confronted by the loss of all he had worked for, but the homely rugged face and level glance told of a cool spirit and a ready courage. Jones' smile announced the result of his swift assay.

WADE was staring at him, and his eyes lighted in response to the other's steady gaze and its message. He looked at Jones' position, his hands so far from his guns.

"No need o' that," Wade said.

"It's to quiet Limpy," Jones grinned. "He gets ideas like a cow get ticks. They come, and they grow, and all hell can't move 'em. So your friend Jed, who was pickin' on you in the saloon, paid a call tonight."

"Jed Mills?" Wade asked. "How'd you know?"

"Heard his name spoken. All Cope's punchers kids?"

"He's got ten old hands but they ain't bothered me," Wade answered. "Cope keeps 'em worrying at those three across the valley, I guess."

"How about the Benton hands?"

"Probably some was here tonight. Matt Rowley takes orders from Cope."

"What's Denton doing?"

"Grant Denton's been sick most a year," Wade said. "Rowley's his foreman."

Just Jones started. He was silent for some time. Wade built a fire and set coffee to boil.

"Must be other water than what you four homesteaded," Just Jones said at last.

"Plenty when I filed two years ago," Wade explained. "Nobody cared. I was in on the round-up. Things were all right until those three took up across the valley and fenced off the main supply."

"And the two big outfits had to get water or lose cows," Jones commented. "How long's Cope been at the Lazy S?"

"Two years. Since an Eastern syndicate bought the brand."

Just Jones looked at Limpy and smiled.

"I'll make it easier for you," he said. "Goin' to sleep till daylight. I'm interested in what we'll see."

All three were in the saddle at dawn. Jones found a high, straight cut in the mesa's edge. Within were broken slopes, some green grass along a stream.

"You sure had a pretty lay-out," Just Jones said. "How many head?"

"Three hundred," Wade answered. "The canyon was fenced off last night."

A few posts still remained. On the west, at the last post against the cliff, were long strands of wire.

"Fastened their ropes to the wire on the east side and ripped it loose," Wade said.

"Then signal shots and herd came through," Jones nodded.

They rode across the canyon mouth, estimated that two or three thousand head had passed over the torn ground. Inside they found where frantic hoofs had ripped up fresh grass and leveled shallow ditches.

"I irrigated some," Wade explained. "Figured good feed would keep 'em close. Now it's to do over again."

"And Jed Mills a friend of yourn onct," Limpy growled.

Jed's tryin' to save his boss's stock from dying of thirst," Wade said, "Puncher's got to protect his outfit."

JUST JONES rode ahead and around a bend in the canyon. Water from a stream had been collected in a pond, but this had been drained almost empty by the cattle. The land rose beyond in broken folds that were partly timbered. It was an oasis in the desert, but Jones' eyes were directed downward as he rode.

"How far to Mexico?" he asked when the others came up.

"Fifteen miles," Wade said.

"Water?"

"Across the border."

"What you think of that?"

Just Jones pointed at the print of a shod horse on top of the fresh cattle tracks.

"We'd better go back to your place and take on some grub and fill our canteens," Jones said.

Limpy became greatly excited.

"Who's been here?" he demanded. "That bunch turned back last night. How'd they get in? And where they going?"

"What we got to find out," Just Jones said.

Wade Sanders was watching him.

"Mister, how come you know so much?" he asked .

"I'm knowing less all the time," Jones answered.

"You knew these tracks would be here."

"Suspicioned it. Saw three men ride through last night. And I thought it was funny that stock didn't hang around water longer."

"But you've been sayin' something's queer about all this," Wade persisted. "That nothing happened."

"Two big outfits with forty men don't watch cattle die of thirst when only four men are holding water."

"They got stock to water last night."

"And didn't leave it stay there. Or put you out of commission. Let's go find out why."

They returned to the canyon mouth and found where horses had passed in after the cattle. At Wade Sanders' cabin food was rolled in blankets and canteens were filled. Just Jones took a second gun from his saddle roll. He had a rifle in the boot. Wade had a rifle, Limpy a rifle and six gun. The sun was rising when they rode into the broken country on the trail of the cattle.

Tracks told a plain story. After the stock had filled at the pond, three horsemen had driven it back through a draw.

The trail led to the top of the mesa. They dismounted. A big dust cloud rose from the plain.

"They're runnin' your cows into Mexico!" Limpy gasped.

"How about the two or three thousand head of Denton and Lazy S stock?" Wade retorted.

"Think something's queer now?" Just Jones asked.

Wade Sanders looked at Jones. He faced the loss of all he had worked for, but this colossal theft stunned him more.

"It will ruin Grant Denton," he said.

"If a bunch of *vaqueros* came to meet that stock—"

"We can lick 'em!" Wade retorted.

"And be caught with Denton and Lazy S cows close to the border?" Just Jones asked.

Wade stared at Jones with a new respect. Slowly he rolled a cigarette, squatted on his heels.

"Let's get goin'," Limpy insisted.

No one gave heed. Wade scratched figures in the dust.

"I'm sure dumb," he said at last.

"You was in a hole and could see only the inside of it," Jones said.

"Got any ideas?"

"They keep changin'."

"Denton is the one who stands to lose," Wade said. "He's been laid up. Madge, his daughter, rides a lot so she can tell him how things are going. But a girl wouldn't see."

"Neither did you," Just Jones grinned. "Don't Denton trust Rowley?"

"Maybe he smelled somethin' and kept Madge ridin'."

"There's Lazy S cows in that herd," Limpy broke in.

"Which only some Eastern people are losing," Jones said.

"Jim Cope gave the word to drive the cattle through my fence," Wade added.

"And he and Rowley rode out o' town together last night," Just Jones agreed. "Know what I'd do?"

"What?"

"Send Limpy back fast to Denton's. Don't tell Rowley or anybody else what happened. Tell Miss Madge."

"You and me?" Wade asked.

"We'll go stop them cows."

"You a stranger, happenin' along now —they can hang it on you," Wade said.

"Complete," Just Jones grinned. "Let's start."

THE herd was about four miles ahead when they began their pursuit. A slight breeze came from the south.

"Which will keep the dust between them and us," Just Jones said. "Is Limpy safe?"

"He's a good friend to me," Wade said. "His name ruined him, John Bunyan. Been joked so much he's quit half a dozen ranches. Now he's on the prod all the time."

"That's how I meant. If he happens to meet anybody, gets riled up—"

"Stopping this herd's enough to worry about."

They ranged back and forth until they knew only three men were driving the stolen stock southward.

"Which gives us a chance," Just Jones said.

"We got to make sure."

"So much dust, we can get right in among 'em. Two'll have to be riding drag."

Wade grinned for the first time that morning, as if to seal this new friendship.

"Suits me," he said.

Neither spoke of the chances they took. The rustlers might move out occasionally to look at their back trail, but Just Jones and Wade rode swiftly until they were in the dust, then slowed to a trot. Each had his rifle out.

They could see little. A shout off to the left was reassuring. One rustler, unsuspecting, was hazing the cattle on.

A piece of Wade's hat brim dropped off. Before he could be startled he heard a shot to the right.

Just Jones spurred forward, swung. Two more shots came. Jones fired at the sound.

Hoofs pounded to the left. A shot came from there. Wade dashed toward it, found himself among cattle.

He glimpsed a shadowy horseman, fired. Rifles roared behind him. A bullet came close, the instant report from the left.

Cattle broke into a gallop. More shots sounded, and the stampede was on.

Wade spurred back, as near as he could judge in the direction from which he had come. The dust thinned. He went on to get into the clear, to be ready for anyone who tried to escape.

He emerged. Great billows rose from the hoofs of frantic cattle. The main body of the herd was headed eastward, though cows were running in every direction.

A horseman dashed out of the dust. Wade started toward him at a lope. When he saw it was not Just Jones' horse he spurred to a run.

The man came to meet him. When they were a hundred yards apart, Wade jerked to a sliding stop, threw himself to the ground, began shooting.

A blow on the left shoulder staggered him. He held out his left arm with difficulty but took careful aim. His foe fell forward, slid to the ground.

Wade remounted. His left arm was useless.

Dust settled. A riderless horse emerged from the yellow fog. No cattle were within a mile now. A third horse appeared, far to the south. It stopped in the clear air but soon its rider spurred it on toward the west.

Wade started in pursuit. But he was weak. Soon he slowed to a walk. He scarcely knew when Just Jones rode up.

"Stay in the saddle if you can, son," Jones said.

He gave Wade a drink of water, cut away the blood-stained shirt and found a hole under the collar bone, another behind.

"Lucky it was a 30-30 and not a slug out of a forty-five," he said as he manipulated the arm. "Maybe nicked a bone but didn't break any."

"One got away," Wade mumbled.

"Yeah, one. Let's start."

"Got to get that stock back," Wade protested. "Madge's father'll go broke."

"Madge'd rather lose cows than you, feller."

Just Jones rode close, steadying the wounded youth. The coming miles, he knew, would be longest Wade Sanders had ever ridden.

They passed the body of the man Wade had killed, but Wade's eyes were closed, his lips tight. Just Jones saw another body in the settling dust.

A few cows were in sight now. Most of them had disappeared in rough, brushy ground far to the east.

The horses walked slowly. Wade clung to the horn and Just Jones steadied him. After an hour Jones began to look ahead for dust. He hoped Limpy Bunyan would come soon with Denton riders.

None appeared. Limpy, Jones decided, had blundered. He suspected that Limpy always blundered. They came to the edge of the mesa, dipped into the broken country.

Wade Sanders swayed in the saddle. Jones used both hands to hold him on a steep slide. Only Star's steadiness kept the horses together.

"Put 'em up, you two!" came a gruff command.

Just Jones made no movement toward complying. But he recognized the voice, and he was afraid. Jed Mills probably had never before ordered a man to hold up his hands. Back of him would be other youths with nervous fingers.

"Lift 'em!" Jed called, a shrill note in his voice.

"Don't be a damned fool," Just Jones answered.

He and Wade reached a level spot, stopped. Horses leaped out from behind shoulders of the arroyo. Their riders held six guns ready.

JUST JONES smiled when he saw the tenseness of the boyish faces and caught uncertainty in their eyes.

"Careful of them things," he warned amiably. "One of you help hold Wade. My back's most broke."

No one spoke for a moment. Not a gun wavered.

"What's the matter with Wade?" Jed demanded at last.

"What we were talking about yesterday. The other fellow shot first."

"But what are you two doing with Lazy S cows?" Jed asked.

"Trying to get 'em back," Just Jones answered. "It was a bright play you boys made last night, running all that stock in here so rustlers could get at it so easy."

Jed did not reply. He and his companions stared with more uncertainty. Jones saw that their guns were getting heavy.

"Quit being so dumb!" Jones barked savagely. "One of you come help me. Want this man to bleed to death?"

"Lazy S cows are gone, and who could 'a' run 'em off except you two?" Jed Mills retorted.

Just Jones unleashed a furious blast of contempt for their youth, inexperience and lack of brains. When he had finished he started the two horses.

The six young punchers followed in silence. Jones did not look back to see if they still carried their guns. This began to dawn on them, and weapons were returned to holsters.

At Wade's cabin Jones eased him from the saddle and dragged him in to a bunk. He tore off the shirt, got water to bathe the wound, started a fire.

When his first aid efforts were finished he went to the door. The six were gathered there.

"Somebody's been using you," Jones said harshly. "You drove that stock in last night and then lit out."

"We figured we ought to come back this morning and watch it," Jed said. "We didn't go far."

"But soon's you turned tail and ran, three men took those cows and shoved 'em on to the mesa," Just Jones continued bitingly. "They was shovin' 'em on to Mexico—your stock, Denton's and Wade's. You'll feel fine when word o' that gets around. Lot o' spreads will want to hire you."

All were silent except Jed Mills.

"That'll do to tell," he said sulkily.

"Go see," Just Jones retorted. "You'll find three dead men about five miles south of the breaks. The stock stampeded."

The six did not speak. Youthful eyes were watching Jones' face, and the two guns that hung from his belts. They had been so proud of their own single weapons.

"Well?" Just Jones demanded.

"We'll split," Jed Mills decided.

He told off three men to go south.

"The rest will stay and keep an eye on you," he said.

Just Jones was satisfied and went into the cabin.

Water was heating. He found old flour sacks, set them to boil. He whittled a stick for a probe, boiled that.

Wade watched the preparations.

"May be a hunk o' cloth caught inside," Just Jones said.

He heard the boys talking outside but did not worry about them. He heard saddle leather creak and the sound of horses' feet, knew the three had departed for the mesa.

"They'll see what happened and get the proof," Jones said to Wade. "Some-

"Reach!" a harsh voice sounded.

body'll have this fastened on him."

"There comes Limpy," Wade said.

Just Jones heard the approaching horse, heard Jed Mills and his two companions mount. Jones went to the door to see them ride out to meet a big man on a big roan horse.

"Jim Cope," he said. "Things are getting tight."

CHAPTER III

SUICIDE CANYON

COPE stopped when he met his men. They talked a few moments. One of the boys started at a run, across the canyon, then into it. Just Jones shouted, but the rider went on, digging spurs.

Jim Cope and the other two came at a trot, Cope unconcernedly in the lead. He stopped a few yards away.

"What's this fairy tale you fed my boys?" he asked.

"Why did you send a man to stop those three when they were going to get the facts?" Just Jones countered.

"I've got all the facts I want," Cope said. "I spotted you in the saloon last night. I'd been waiting for you. This whole set-up was too good, Jones, if that's your name."

"It was a good set-up," Jones admitted.

He stood facing them, easily, his body loose. The two boys with Cope were watching his right hand, fascinated.

"Yep, a good one," Cope said. "It had me fooled. Wade homesteading here didn't mean anything. Still plenty of water. But those three tough hombres across the valley didn't look like peaceable cowmen."

"They are now," Jones said.

Cope ignored that.

"Now it's all plain," he said. "We run

in a bunch o' cows, like you figured we would. You let 'em come through, and you keep 'em right on going—to Mexico."

Jones grinned. "You've almost hit it, Cope," he said.

"Sounds good to me," Jim Cope continued. "But even spotting you like I did last night, I never thought you was small. You didn't look like the kind that would pick on a poor half loco kid like Limpy Bunyan. Or was Limpy hep to you, too?"

Just Jones' eyes narrowed ever so slightly. If Limpy had been stopped on his way to the Denton ranch, most anything might happen. Jim Cope caught that look.

"Limpy disappeared in Waddytown last night," he explained to his boys. "He was seen talking with this man a lot. Limpy had all the money he's taken in the last two months while the owner of the stable's been away. Bet we find that money in this so-called Jones' pockets. And maybe someday we'll find Limpy with a hole in his back."

Just Jones knew relief and a new fear while Cope was speaking. It looked now like Limpy had been intercepted and killed. Cope was certainly taking advantage of every way out.

" I admire your luck," Just Jones said.

The foreman of the Lazy S grinned. "Boys, you've let a slick rooster fool you," he said. And if you want proof of all I've said, I can give you a lot. Those three across the valley will never be seen around here again."

"They've taken a long ride," Just Jones agreed.

"Which is about all the proof a sensible man needs."

"It ain't getting any cows back."

"You're not foolin' me there, Jones," Cope said. "A man don't figure on stealin' all that without having a sure, quick market. A bunch of Mexicans has got that stock across the line by now and there's no getting it back."

Just Jones grinned, but he did not feel like grinning. If stolen stock were to be saved for Wade and Madge Denton's father, action should be taken soon. Mexicans might be at work, as Cope seemed so confident.

"And I suppose you called your boys back because you didn't want 'em wasting their lives," Jones said.

"They're nice boys, and young," Cope nodded.

Just Jones hesitated. Wade needed attention quickly. But Jim Cope needed watching. And Limpy Bunyan evidently had failed.

So far, Jones was in complete control, but he knew that could not continue. A number of things might happen, some things must be done.

"You've talked enough," Just Jones said suddenly. "Clear out."

Jim Cope looked at the cliffs above the cabin, looked up the canyon, grinned.

"You seem to be the boss," he said, and wheeled.

"Straight north or I'll use a rifle," Jones commanded.

Cope nodded. He and his two men broke into a lope.

Just Jones looked up at the cliff, listened a moment in the canyon, then hurried inside.

"We'll get this out of the way," he said.

HE made final preparations. One eye was on Wade Sanders' white face as he probed. Jones felt something move. Wade winced. Sweat glistened on his face.

"Hang on," Just Jones whispered.

He was intent, did not hear a footstep at the door.

"Reach!" a harsh voice sounded.

Just Jones had the wool shreds almost in his grasp.

"Only a minute more," he said coolly, and proceeded to push the probe through.

"That's out!" he exclaimed. "You don't stand so much chance o' blood poisoning. What's my next move, mister?"

"Back up. Keep your hands high."

Jones obeyed. His two guns were taken.

"Now finish your job."

As Jones prepared bandages he saw the long figure of Matt Rowley, Denton foreman, just inside the door.

"How do you think this fellow stands?" Jones asked Wade.

"For stringin' up a cow thief soon's he's caught," Rowley said. "When I get some help, that's what'll be done."

Just Jones finished his bandaging.

"If Matt Rowley's honest, Denton's got a chance to get his cows back," he said to Wade.

"I always figured Matt so," Wade answered. "But all this—I ain't got it worked out myself."

"That's easy," Just Jones said. "Jim Cope staged a show last night. He saw those three rustlers in Waddytown and gave 'em the word."

"But Rowley was with Cope then," Wade protested.

"So Rowley knew about it or was played for a sucker."

Wade lifted himself on the bunk.

"When it was found out, I'd be stuck with stealin' 'em!" he exclaimed.

"You and Cope's three pardners," Jones agreed.

"And with them dead, it's you and me."

"You and me. I wish, son, I'd kept Limpy this morning and sent you to Denton's."

Wade cursed as he fell back on the bunk.

"Wish I knew whether Matt is a crook or plain damned fool!" he stormed helplessly.

"Don't mind me, boys," Rowley said.

Just Jones looked at the lanky foreman.

"Guess Rowley's not a damned fool," he said.

Jones sat down and rolled a cigarette. As he lighted it he heard hoof beats. Four horses dashed out of the canyon.

"Come in, boys," Rowley called. "It's safe now."

The three young punchers who had gone to the mesa, and the one Cope had sent for them, entered the cabin. They stared in astonishment when they saw the gun in Rowley's hand and Just Jones' empty holsters.

"Where's Cope?" they asked.

"He'll be back soon," Rowley answered.

Cope and his two men arrived a few minutes later.

"These jaspers tryin' to make me believe you stole your own cows," Rowley laughed. "I was on the cliff when you left."

"How you happen to be up there?" Jones shot at him.

"Havin' a look to see if Denton stock was still thirsty. And when there wa'n't no stock, I got me a couple o' suspicions."

Rowley grinned delight in his own cleverness.

Jones could not decide whether he was a good actor or too conceited to change an opinion.

Jim Cope came forward.

"I saw you on the cliff, Matt," he said. "Knew you'd handle things and waited around. Anybody got any objec-

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tions to hanging these two rustlers?"

"I have," Just Jones said promptly. "If we're hung, the last bit of evidence against the real thieves will be buried."

Rowley guffawed.

"Buried is right!" he shouted.

Cope and some of the boys laughed. Even Jones grinned as he cursed himself for the slip. Things were going to happen pretty fast, and only his wits could save Wade and himself.

And as Just Jones looked at Cope he knew his wits would not avail. The man's genial face and steady eyes had built a reputation for integrity which a stranger could not undermine. The sooner Jones and Wade were dead, the safer Cope would be.

But Just Jones launched into argument. He talked convincingly, first relating all that had happened, how it must have been arranged, how proof of his contentions might still be obtained.

He addressed himself to Rowley and the six boys, putting questions to them as if they were men of experience.

"This feller'll talk me to sleep if you don't stop him," Matt Rowley broke in at last.

"Seems like if you put him where he's put me, he's made out a fool proof case against himself," Cope agreed. "I feel sorry for Wade Sanders, but it's hard enough to raise cows in this country without havin' to raise 'em for rustlers."

Rowley nodded. "It's a plain case o' suicide on the part of Jones," he said. "Me, I'm for—"

He wheeled. Young punchers crowded to door and window. Just Jones was tense to spring, but Jim Cope's gun never wavered.

"It's Madge Denton!" a boy shouted. "Comin' hell bent."

"Limpy ain't so loco," Wade whispered.

Cope lifted his gun, and Jones understood. Cope need only say he shot to prevent escape.

"You dirty crook!" Jones snarled.

Matt Rowley whirled, gun ready.

"Save your ammunition, Jim," he said. "A rope can be used over and over again."

Cope's weapon was lowered. Madge Denton burst in.

WADE SANDERS' cabin was small, and ten men were packed inside when the girl entered. The young punchers made way for her and she saw Cope and Rowley. Behind them were Just Jones and the bunk with Wade lying on it.

Madge looked at Wade, and he smiled.

"Only pinked in the shoulder," Wade said.

Color came back to her face, and with it a blaze of anger. She whirled on Cope and Rowley.

"You're a fine pair, picking on a lone man but afraid to tackle those three across the valley!" she cried.

Jim Cope bowed. His broad face was grave.

"Miss Madge, that would be a just charge if everything was like you think," he said. "We didn't know until this morning. It ain't just a matter of water, Miss Madge. About three thousand head of Denton and Lazy S stock has been run off to Mexico."

"Stock that you drove through Wade's fence last night," she added hotly.

Just Jones was watching. For the first time he saw Jim Cope knocked off balance.

"How did you know that, Madge?" Matt Rowley demanded.

"Not from you," the girl said. "You heard my father's orders to leave Wade alone."

"Miss Madge, your father being sick, he didn't know how desperate we were for water," Cope said soothingly. "We had to do that last night. Only we never suspected Wade and this stranger was countin' on it. They had it all planned to steal the whole three thousand head."

Men scarcely breathed when Cope finished. All knew how Madge felt about Wade Sanders. And knowing Madge, they expected an instant explosion. Even Cope was braced for it.

But Madge only looked at Wade a moment before she spoke.

"So that's what happened? Good thing you were on the job, Cope, to get our cows back for us."

Cope did not answer. But Matt Rowley could always talk.

"The cows is gone," he said. "Greasers met 'em and took the herd across."

"Oh! And you followed and had a battle. Captured Jones and shot Wade."

Madge looked at the young punchers and smiled.

"My father will be obliged to you boys," she said. "I hope you got a few greasers. They're fine to break in on."

Feet moved uneasily. Blushes mounted under deep tan.

"We ain't had no battle," Jed Mills blurted. "We didn't shoot Wade. Ain't seen the cows since last night."

"Then you shot Wade," and Madge whirled on Cope.

"I don't know who did," the Lazy S foreman answered, "but I've got a pretty good idea of what happened."

Jim Cope went over all the ground again. He accused Just Jones of being the brains of the rustlers, of planting the three men across the valley. Then all five had pushed the stock on toward Mexico. As for Wade, there probably had been a row and some shooting.

"With them three getting away with the loot and leaving Jones and Wade out of it," Cope concluded.

"Now what?" Madge asked.

"Just one thing to do," was the quiet answer. "You'd better get home, Miss Madge. 'Cause we intend to do it."

Madge stepped close and stared up at him.

"I'm going to see the cow thieves hung," she said harshly. "Hung or shot."

"All right," Cope agreed, and he could not keep the eagerness from his voice. "We'll get it out of the way quick."

Just Jones was watching the girl. Now he spoke for the first time.

"Miss Madge, all the truth ain't been told."

"Don't pay any attention to him," Matt Rowley scoffed. "He can talk feathers onto a steer's back."

"He ought to have his say," she suggested.

"Had plenty," Cope said.

"There wasn't any greasers to meet those cows," Jones continued evenly.

"How do you know?" the girl asked.

"Because it's true, what Cope says, except for two things. We only played Wade for a sucker. He got shot because he smelled something. And I wasn't the brains. I was only one of the common

"The greasers have come."

hands. The man who brought those three in to file on water and planned the whole thing was Jim Cope."

For the first time, Cope lost his temper.

"You dirty, lyin'—" he began, and lifted his gun.

But Madge Denton jumped in front of Jones and confronted the foreman.

"And those three from across the valley ain't dead," Just Jones added. "They got the stock over the line. I saw 'em."

"But you been sayin' they're dead!" Cope shouted.

"Maybe I did," Jones admitted. "I hope they're clear and get the money. A rat like you ought to lose out."

"THERE is something funny about all this," Madge said. "We're going to have the truth before we go any further. Three thousand head of stock will leave a track or two."

"All right," Cope said suddenly. "Matt and a couple of men can stay here to guard Jones. I'll take the rest and go see what we can find."

Just Jones took a step past Madge to

protest, but Rowley shoved a gun against him. And Cope was already out of the door, calling four of his young men to follow. In a moment their horses were thundering away into the canyon.

Madge Denton dropped on her knees beside the bunk and brushed the damp hair from Wade's forehead.

"You didn't doubt me once?" she demanded.

"I was too busy thinking how smart you are," Wade grinned. "Kiss me."

But when Madge bent her head he whispered, "Get Matt."

She kissed him on both cheeks, jumped to her feet.

"You need nursing!" she cried. "Fresh bandages. Boys, get me some wood and water. Hurry."

The two young punchers jumped to obey. Only Matt Rowley was on guard now. He stood against a wall, weapon ready, his eyes on Just Jones.

Madge, darting from stove to table, swerved, threw herself on the foreman and wrapped both arms around his gun.

Just Jones leaped, jerked the weapon free. A moment later he had his own twin artillery.

When the boys came in he covered them. Madge took their guns and they were ordered into a corner.

"What's the matter with you, Madge?" Matt Rowley exploded. "Hookin' up with rustlers?"

"Listen!" the girl commanded. "And you boys. One thing none of you knows. Limpy Bunyan was here with Wade last night. When Just Jones learned the cattle had been started for Mexico, he knew what it meant and sent Limpy to tell me. Would he have done that if he is a rustler?"

"Took Limpy a long while," Wade said.

"He couldn't find me, and wouldn't tell anyone else. I was across the valley. We tore out the fencing early this morning, watered our stock. Limpy's gone to the ranchhouse to get dad. Bring him in the buckboard."

"And some men?" Just Jones asked.

"Every hand we have."

Jones frowned. He looked out the door but could not see dust to the north.

"Can you use a gun as well as you do everything else, Miss Madge?" he asked.

"I can do some damage," she said.

"Wade will help. You two keep these hombres quiet until your men come."

"See!" Matt Rowley cackled. "Wants to get away."

"Got to hurry," Just Jones said. "Lot o' things can happen on the mesa. Those are nice boys. They believe in Cope, and he'd do any dirty thing to them. And maybe he did have greasers waitin' to take that stock."

"You mean you're going alone?" Madge asked.

"With you busy, looks like I'd have to."

"You'll never see him again," Rowley scoffed.

"You're such an utter fool, Matt!" the girl stormed. "And Just Jones, before you go, I never believed anything they said about you. Not a thing."

"Thank you, Miss Madge," and Jones bowed. "I didn't know I looked so honest."

"It wasn't your looks," the girl laughed. "It was the way you took care of your horse."

Just Jones bowed again.

"Star is a nice hoss," he said. "Now don't you worry about Wade. He'll pull through fine. And I'm wishin' you a lot o' happiness."

JUST JONES found a new way up to the mesa. He did not want to be trapped again by the four young punchers or have Cope see him on the upper flat.

The young punchers were still his greatest fear. He had humiliated them once, they believed him a rustler, and now were more dangerous than ever. Eager for experience, for an opportunity to prove themselves, they would take chances an older man's caution would forbid.

Just Jones rode south, keeping along the edge of broken ground. The earth was hard here and Star's hoofs kicked up little dust. Soon he met a few cattle. Their heads were low. Thirst tortured them again. But Wade Sanders' tank was filling up.

As Jones passed more stray cattle on the mesa the dust became thicker. Soon

he took to the open, broke Star into a lope. The dust increased. He could not see Cope and his men now, but knew they could not see him.

He passed the place where he and Wade had fought the rustlers that morning. Cope and his boys, tracks showed, had stopped, gone on.

Dust increased. Cattle were heading south now, and that meant they were being driven. Jones went more cautiously.

Broken ground slowed him, and trees and brush. Dust thinned rapidly before a south breeze. Suddenly Just Jones emerged in the clear. Directly in front two horsemen were dropping into an arroyo. He recognized the mounts of young punchers.

Star went forward at a fast walk. Off to the east a rider dashed out of the dust, wheeled back into it again. Many cattle over there were moving southward. Another rider appeared.

"The greasers have come, Star hoss," Just Jones said. "Jim Cope was speaking truth. If he hooks up with them now, he's better off than he planned. Nobody to split with except that one Wade and me missed."

After a moment he added, "Unless that long rider came back. No reason why he shouldn't."

Star's ears went up as he approached the arroyo. Jones halted instantly, slipped to the ground and took his rifle.

He crept forward. When he reached low brush he got down and crawled. A few yards brought him to the edge.

It was a wide, shallow wash leading from mountains on the west. A few cows milled around, heads up, bawling. They had been driven from a small spring. The four young punchers and Jim Cope were watering their horses.

This was probably the only water in the desert, Jones suspected. But Jim Cope had known of it. He had come directly to it.

Jones looked quickly around. The Mexicans might know of the spring. It might have been selected as a meeting place. If Mexicans came now, and Jones had seen at least two, what would Cope do with the four boys?

Then a man stood up across the wash. He had a rifle ready. And he was not a Mexican. Jones recognized him at once as one of the trio of rustlers, the one Wade Sanders had seen escaping.

"Come here, Cope," the man called.

The five in the wash whirled. Cope stood at one side. His hand dropped to his gun, but the rifle barked.

"None of that," the rustler said sharply. "Come here."

The four young punchers stared at Cope.

"Tried to double-cross me, eh?" the rustler snarled. "Said you'd 'tend to Wade and that stranger. But you figured if they cleaned us out you'd get all the money for the cattle."

"You've got it wrong, Steve," Cope protested. "I didn't let 'em—"

"Shut up! You've got nothing to say. But I'm talkin'. Two ways. The greasers are drivin' the stock south. I'm goin' with 'em. I'll collect. Don't you wish you'd played square?"

He jerked the rifle to his shoulder. The movement was so quick Jim Cope could take only a step. He tumbled forward.

The killer did not lower his weapon. As he pumped in a fresh shell he swung on the four young punchers.

"You might make trouble," he said.

Just Jones fired as the man's cheek cuddled the rifle butt. The rustler pitched into the wash.

Leaping up, Jones covered the four boys as they whirled to look up at him.

"Step over here," he said.

They came, astonishment still in their faces.

"What you think of Jim Cope now?" Jones demanded.

They were silent, embarrassed. Finally Jed Mills took a step forward.

"We ain't sure, but Jim was sure in with that rustler," he said.

"You all think that?"

They shifted uncomfortably and nodded. Just Jones grinned.

"All right, boys. Now I'll give you a chance to use them guns. Jed, go bring that feller's rifle. I'll be with you in a minute."

They were waiting when he arrived on Star.

"We got to get that stock," he said. "They're movin' it south fast."

He did not want these boys hurt. None was yet twenty, and Jones knew they would go up against tough men.

"Workin' all those cows back, the greasers will be well scattered," he continued. "We'll stick together and pick 'em off one at a time if we can. Dust will be heavy, so stick close. We'll be shooting at each other if we get separated."

He gave the rustler's rifle to Jed.

"I appreciate that," Jed said. "And I been a damned fool."

"We all are when we get started," Jones laughed. "Only some never get over it."

They rode down the wash, climbed the bank when they were in the dust, and almost at once were away after a startled rider.

The boys and Just Jones rolled on along the line behind the cattle. They became separated. They probably fired at each other occasionally.

"But they're learnin', Star hoss," Just Jones grinned.

AN hour later they could not find more Mexican cattle thieves. They saw two bodies and three riderless horses as they ranged back, waiting for the cattle to quiet down.

Then a dozen Denton riders came and took over. Just Jones and his companions returned to the breaks. Jones watched the boys as they rode. Their faces had stiffened and there was a new, steady light in their eyes.

Wade Sanders' place was deserted. Wheel tracks told that the wounded man had been taken north to the Denton ranch. The five rode on until they reached the trail to Waddytown.

Just Jones stopped.

"Got to be going," he said. "I was only ridin' through anyhow. Give my regards to Miss Madge and Wade."

In town, Just Jones let Star cool and then slushed him with water and rubbed him well, gave him a big feed of oats. The stable was deserted, the bartender alone in the saloon.

That worthy took one look and then set out bottle and glass.

"Limpy's disappeared," he said in a low voice. "Jim Cope was all excited about it last night."

"And folks is sayin' I'm responsible, eh?"

"How'd you know?"

"I'm getting used to it," Just Jones said. "How far's the talk gone?"

"There's a dozen men in town and Cope set 'em to talkin' pretty strong."

"Think I'd better move on tonight?"

"Night ridin's often the healthiest," the bartender said.

Just Jones sighed. He was tired. But before he departed he borrowed paper and pen and wrote a letter on the bar.

The envelope was addressed to the State Capitol.

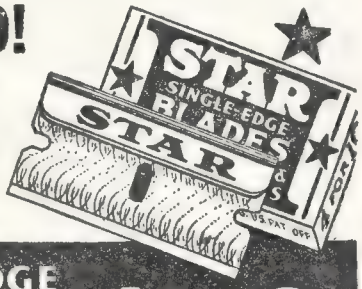
Dear Governor:

This part of your State is plenty peaceful. There never was any cattle war to get excited about. Somebody got him a notion to steal some cows but he vamosed.

Your obedient servant,
Just Another Jones.

MOUNTAIN FEUD!

Clean the whiskers from the hills and valleys of your face without a struggle—use *extra*-keen Star Single-edge Blades. Famous since 1880. 4 blades for 10¢. Star Blade Div., Brooklyn, N. Y.



STAR SINGLE-EDGE BLADES 4 FOR 10¢
FOR GEM AND EVER-READY RAZORS

MAKE THIS TEST and increase your pipe pleasure!

1 If you think you enjoy tobacco flavor chiefly through your sense of *taste*...make this simple test. While you're smoking, pinch your nostrils shut. Note that your tobacco smoke tastes flat...*flavorless.*

2 *Now let go.* The flavor returns immediately, proving that you enjoy tobacco flavor chiefly through your sense of *smell.* That's why HALF & HALF'S distinctive *aroma,* added to its finer *taste,* gives you richer, fuller tobacco flavor. This exclusive quality is called FLAVOROMA.

Why you get FLAVOROMA only from Half & Half

As the test shows, you enjoy flavor *partly* through your sense of taste, *largely* through your sense of smell.

Knowing this, we set out to blend a tobacco appealing partly to your tongue, but *especially* to the keen nerves at the back of your nose.

In HALF & HALF, we got a blend that does just that. A blend with a special quality which we call FLAVOROMA...a perfect combination of AROMA and TASTE that produces finer tobacco flavor.

It is this exclusive quality of FLAVOROMA in HALF & HALF that gives you *more* pipe-smoking pleasure.

Try HALF & HALF yourself. Learn why FLAVOROMA is switching so many pipe-smokers to this tobacco every day.

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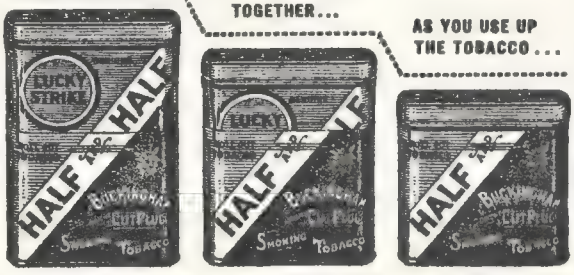
THE TIN TELESCOPES!

JUST PUSH IT TOGETHER...

AS YOU USE UP THE TOBACCO...

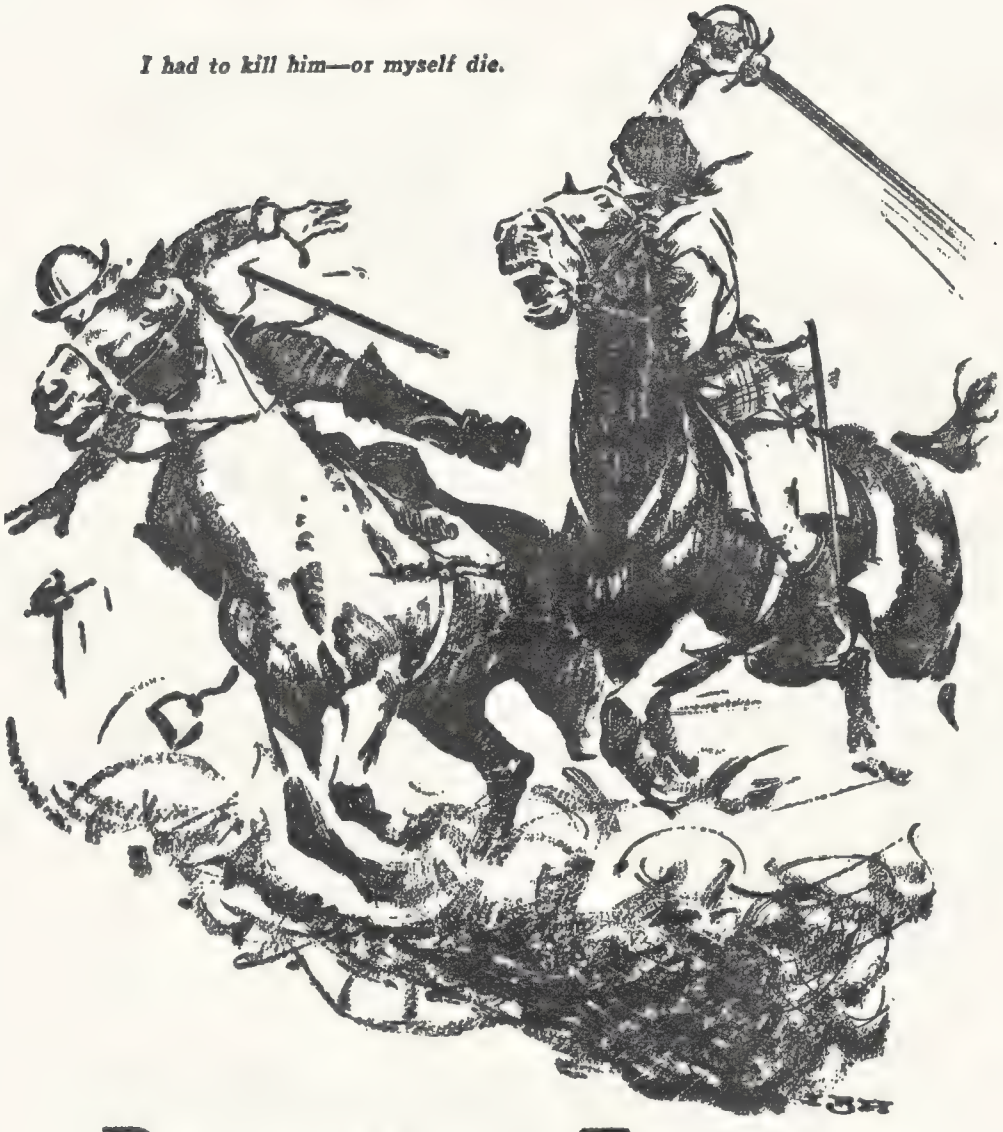


THE TELESCOPE TIN gets smaller and smaller as you use it, makes tobacco easy to get at all the way down. No scraped fingers as you reach down for the last load. (Patent No. 1,770,920.)

Enjoy the FLAVOROMA of

HALF AND HALF

FOR PIPE OR CIGARETTE



I had to kill him—or myself die.

BLACKCOCK'S FEATHER

Second Part of Five

By MAURICE WALSH

(BEGIN HERE)

THIS is the story of me, David Gordon, and it begins on the day I landed in Dublin town in Ireland, where Queen Elizabeth's William de Burgh had been appointed Lord Deputy of that troublous land, and no stranger was welcome until he had stated his allegiance.

Francis Vaughan, a kin of Sir Williams', had tried to enlist me into that invading army, but without success. I had no mind to do sword work for a queen that had put Mary of Scotland to death, for I was out of Scotland myself.

In Dublin I met Colum O'More and Cathal O'Dwyer, two Irish fighting men, and saw Colum slain brutally by Captain Cosby of the Englishers, and from that day my course was set. For I drew sword to avenge my new friend, and only Vaughan's intervention let me escape from that town and its gallows.

I took all of eight days to ride through hostile country to the Ulster border, looking for my kin, O'Cahan of Dungiven. It was a perilous trip. The truce was still kept, but word had been passed that the English were arriving in great ships, and no man was safe until he could give a good account of himself.

As it happened, the long arm of Elizabeth reached out for me even at the border. Francis Vaughan, a good man for all his court-made foppishness, tried to bring me back, knowing that I was no friend of his people. But my sword sheared his blade in two, and I outrode his men to escape.

I was not a fighting man, but as I rode on, I was promising myself two things. Captain Cosby would die by my own sword—and my father, who had married the daughter of an Irish chief, would have a son fighting by the side of her countrymen.

CHAPTER V

"THANK A DEAD MAN!"

HERE at last was Dungannon, the hub of the Northern power, and it was not even a walled town. O'Neill himself had burned it down the previous years as a drastic measure against the sudden advance of the English from Dundalk, that advance that had ended at stark Clontibret field. And now there was the big stone keep with its great walled bailey and, so far as I could see, not another stone building in the place. It was a wide-scattered disarray of clay, wattled, and wooden houses. Some of the houses had gardens, some were enclosed by an earthen rampart, some hedged with the whitethorn in full bloom, and other lowly ones clustered in a close with a post-gate at the end. Many of the wooden buildings were commodious and well constructed, with steep-pitched roofs, stone chimneys, carved doorways, and walls painted in bright colors.

There was no regular street or paved way in the town. Here a width of as much as fifty paces lay between the houses, and there two gable-ends left scant room for a couple of horsemen abreast. Luckily the weather had been dry, and the clay road, packed hard, made easy going. There were dogs everywhere, big wolfhounds, lighter greyhounds, and a squat blue-gray beast of the otter-hound breed—and all of them that were in sight came barking at me in no unfriendly spirit.

I was taken with Dungannon. It was sunny and airy, and by no means dirty. Used as I was to Flanders towns, where the tall houses are cooped within walls, and the air has that sour mustiness that the plague left behind, this open careless place, with the sun shining and the big stone keep towering above the medley, was a pleasant change. It was more a camp than a town, for, though women looked at me over cut-down doors and children pranked in the open, there were soldiers everywhere. Many of the large wooden houses, within their raths, served as barracks, and big, clean-faced fighting men moved about here and there in the lazy, good-natured way of their class. Within one rath I saw the bonnets and philabegs of Highlandmen, and was half-tempted to turn back to the unbarred gate, but when I looked into the next rath, there were more and still more of my countrymen. So I rode on. I did not know then that O'Neill's Bonnachts—his regular troops—were many of them mercenary soldiers from the Western Highlands.

I made my very best show that day. I had groomed Benmee, plaited her mane, flossed out her flowing tail; of her I need not be ashamed. I had ridden her judiciously all the way from Dublin, and now she was in sleekly hard condition, carrying her head and mincing her steps in this strange town like the vain little lady she was. Myself had shaved freshly that morning over a still pool, tried to smooth down the back wave of sullen red hair, reset my blackcock's-

tail plume, and now I rode back straight and head up, my thrown-back cloak showing its lining of smooth fur and the polished hilt of Andrea Ferrara winking in the sun.

I moved along slowly, Benmee's neck arched to the rein, and though my head was still, my eyes roved. The thought in my mind was that it must be eleven of the clock and near time for dinner, and that this was not Ireland if some one did not offer it to me. Better leave it to chance, and keep trending towards the dun of O'Neil. Even now, from that airt, the odor of cooking meat came to me and made mouth water.

Many men saluted me frankly as we passed; all of them looked knowingly at the clean legs of the mare; no man at all hindered or questioned me. This was a free town. And then as I opened the wide space before the dun I overtook two men strolling easily, and they moved aside to let me pass. I drew in Benmee and lifted a hand, half in salute and half in query.

One of them sported a bonnet the marrow of my own, but instead of phila-beg he wore horseman-buff with a black steel back-and-breast. A lantern-jawed man he was, with a long Scots nose. The other was a slim, swack young fellow, with no covering on his notable yellow mane of hair. His short cloak was lined with rose-hued silk, and there were red selvages to his bleached linen tunic; a gallant lad, with a reckless blue eye and a smile about his mouth.

"Ho, man o' Scotland!" said the lantern-jawed man in the clipped Gaelic of Strathclyde. "What clan?"

"Gordon," I told him.

"So! Mary Stuart's Highland hawks! Not many of them stray this road. I am a Crawford out of Carrick-Kennedy country."

The young Irishman was running his eye over me and over Benmee.

"Man, Hugh!" he cried. "Do they breed darlings like that mare in the Antrim glens?" He looked at me with query in his eyes.

"They do not," said I.

"Maybe in Claneboy?"

"If you want to know, I come from Dublin," and I grinned at his gay smile.

"Dublin!" exclaimed Hugh Crawford the Scot, interest alight in his eye. "With message for O'Neill from the new Lord Deputy?"

"I am on my way to visit O'Cahan of Dungiven. Is he by any chance in this place?"

"Donal Ballagh?" cried the Irishman. "He is not here—not at Dungiven. Do you not know? He is truce hostage with Bingham in Galway."

And there was my luck gone awry once again. This custom of hostage was usual in Irish truces. In the present one with the English the Ulster leaders had yielded as hostages six young chiefs of note.

"Galway!" I repeated the word after him.

"Ay, Galway! sixty leagues from here, and there he will be—having the fine times—while the truce lasts."

I WAS once again thinking bitterly of Dame Luck. All the way from Dublin had I come to see this cousin O'Cahan, and now he was at the other side of Ireland. Blood is thicker than water, and the family tie is a close one amongst us. I had looked forward to offering my services to a chief of my own blood, knowing that he would be understanding with my shortcomings. Now I was only a stranger amongst strangers—one Scots fighting man among the many—and, tall as I was and strong as I was, I had not much to offer: a bloodless sword, a sour experience of life, and no experience at all of war. Very well, then!

I heard the young Irishman speaking.

"Do not be minding that at dinner-time," he said lightly. "Come and eat with us, man of the Gordons."

Already I was beginning to feel aloof, with my native dourness. "Let me not trouble you. The ordinary—"

He laughed. "There is none. No man goes hungry in the dun of O'Neill. My name is Doncadh Donn Maguire."

Here, then, was one of O'Neill's young smiters, son of that great Maguire who had scattered the English at the Ford-of-Biscuits.

"Come on, lads!" said Crawford. "The O'Neill keeps open table."

No doubt, this tough and hard-headed Scots leader of mercenaries had been deciding in his own mind that a man who was come out of Dublin was worth questioning, and that the man to do the questioning was not far away.

"Thank you," said I then. "My name is David Gordon."

I slid off my saddle pad, slung rein over arm, and the three of us walked across the wide exercise ground towards the great keep. It was as stirring as a hive, this dun of O'Neill. Outside the big bailey were a score or more of Irish-bred shelts in care of ragged horse-boys, and Maguire called one of these to take charge of Benmee. We entered the bailey through a postern-gate in the rear wall, and found a multitude like a clan gathering—chiefs and retainers in full costume. Surely, O'Neill kept open house.

Hugh Roe O'Neill had been gently bred and nurtured, and this courtyard showed it. There was a great square of closely-cut green lawn in the middle and beds of tulips flamed along the edges. Beyond rose the massive bulk of the keep, with an open door at the head of cut-stone steps, a black arch piercing the middle, and tall, glazed windows looking inwards.

Along the sunny side of the bailey was a wide terrace under a light pent-roof, and in there scullions were busy laying immensely long tables. Groups of men lolled about on the grass, waiting for the dinner hour: clan chiefs in their white and saffron tunics and silk-lined cloaks; gallowglass captains in steel and buff; young men, bare-headed and clean-shaven; old men with long hair and beards; seannachies, harpers, brehons—all the retainers of a royal Gaelic court. And there were ladies there too, tight-bosomed, flowing-kirtled, with lace and linen on their plaited hair.

Near mid-green was a large group round a garden-bench, whereon sat a man and two or three ladies.

"That is O'Neill taking his ease," Doncadh Donn Maguire informed me.

I was too far away to note more than that he was a man with a beard trained in the English mode.

Crawford murmured that he had a word to say to the chief, and hurried across the lawn. He looked back significantly at Maguire, and that lad, with a comradely freedom, put his hand within my arm and slanted me towards the dining terrace.

"These fellows will be talking, dry as an old dyke—and keeping dinner late. See that white old rogue taking his seat by O'Neill? He is the greatest tyrant that ever lived enough years to grow gray."

"A relative of yours?" said I guardedly.

"My fine fellow! But for him I would be down beyond in Galway having the fun of the world with Donal Ballagh O'Cahan. That fellow is my father."

"He might be an understanding man," said I.

"He might; but he was young himself once, though you would never be thinking it. You will be sorry missing Donal Ballagh?"

"I am."

"Thick as thieves we are—I never heard him speak of you."

"You would not."

"You know him well?"

"I do not know him at all."

We looked at each other and burst out laughing.

"*Mhuire!*" he exclaimed. "You would be a good man to tell a secret to—and bury it safe. Ah! there's old Paudh going to blow the cowhorn."

That dinner of O'Neill's was an informal affair. As soon as the dinner horn winded the multitude drifted easily towards the tables. There was no order, nor was there any hurry. The crowd circled round, found places, and set to work. The top cross-table was reserved for O'Neill, the ladies, and any of his older chiefs who might be visiting; that table was covered with damask and laid with plate, Dutch pottery, and Venetian glass; there were forks for the ladies and finger-bowls for who cared to use them. The other tables were of bare planed oak and furnished with beechen platters and methers, and drinking-horns edged with silver. Maguire bestowed me amongst fellows of his own at a table about halfway down, and it was surely the noisiest table there.

As I have said, the Irish were notable meat-eaters, and here was meat for an army: beef and pork, fowl and game, venison from the woods, salmon and eels out of Bam Flu, and for the first time since leaving Dublin I tasted wheaten bread. The drink was even more plenteous than the meats; usquebaugh, mead and metheglin, a new English beer, Spanish wine in jars, and Garonne wine in flasks, and never a mug of water. And every one ate hugely and drank copiously, and made talk and laughter without end—not like the forthright Saxon, who centers his mind on his meat, nor like the French, who are also gay talkers, but use extravagant gesture with knife and chicken-bone. And, above the noise and clatter, came the skirl of the pipes from where two tall fellows strutted back and forth on the gravel outside O'Neill's table and played ports that I had heard in far Glenfiddich.

Sometime towards the end of the dinner Maguire left my side, and returned in a matter of a couple of minutes. He placed his hand on my shoulder.

"O'Neill would like to have a word—would like to make your acquaintance, David Gordon," he said.

I had been expecting that message.

I STOOD before O'Neill and his women and his chiefs, and I bowed to him and I bowed to the ladies. The one sitting by him was young and lovely, brown-haired and soft-eyed, and I felt big and awkward and ugly.

"Hugh Roe," said Doncadh Donn Maguire familiarly, "this is David Gordon out of Alban, riding up from Dublin to see Donald Ballagh O'Cahan."

There was but small formality in Gaeldom, where there is vast pride in race. Hugh O'Neill was a queen's earl, but he was not feudal lord. He was chief of the clan, father, brother, friend, to be addressed frankly and called by his name—Hugh, Hugh Roe, Hugh O'Neill; but if one was called upon to be formal he used the proudest title that could be yielded—O'Neill.

He rose to his feet to me.

"Gordon!" said he, and his voice rolled the word deeply. "To be sure. You are Donal Ballagh's cousin?"

And I again bowed.

"I knew it. I saw your father in this very dun when I was a boy. You are welcome to Dungannon, David Gordon. You are my cousin too—twice removed."

His hand clasped mine firmly, and his eyes met mine so keenly that I felt the shock of their scrutiny. Blue eyes they were, deep-set and close-set under brows, and they had a shock like ice or fire. He was a man of middle height, this great O'Neill, with good shoulders, notably long arms, and the slightly bowed legs of the horseman. He wore a silken tunic like his chiefs, went bare-headed like them, but, unlike them, he carried a trained spade-beard on his chin—a fair red beard, already flecked with gray.

He turned to the lovely, brown-haired woman.

"Woman-of-the-house," said he, "this is our kinsman, David Gordon. His father, Iain, a black gerfalcon, stole my cousin, Nuala ni Cahan, from under her father's nose and off to Scotland with her."

The lady smiled to my salutation.

" 'Tis a bad habit men have," she said aptly, and drew brisk laughter, for she herself had been stolen by O'Neill from under the nose of her brother, the Marshal Henry Bagenal.

"Dhia!" exclaimed Hugh Crawford, sitting across the table. "Do you never forget anything you ever saw or heard, O'Neill?"

"But that was a great ploy, Hugh, and she, Nuala—God rest her—the heart-breaker of the north.—And how is Iain Gordon standing the years, David?"

"He is dead, O'Neill," said I, speaking for the first time.

"God rest him! It is good to see one's kin in loneliness." He glanced at young Maguire. "Does David Gordon know about O'Cahan?"

"Hostage in Galway—"

"But not for long, I am thinking." He looked at me and smiled—a wonderfully taking smile, coming out from below his stern eyes, that made me understand why men and women liked him.

"You will be welcome at Dungiven, I think—and you are welcome at Dungannon, I know. It is not forgotten that your father was on O'Neill's side that bad day in Antrim."

"And now," cried his lady, "you will be talking old times and old fights, and we will leave you to it."

THE ladies left us, the pipers stopped playing and hurried to their meat, and O'Neill took my arm.

"Sit down," he said, "and let us pledge each other in a horn of this wine. Crawford you know. This is Maguire of Fermanagh, who has not dowered a certain lad with much sense—"

"True for you, Hugh Roe," agreed Donn Maguire's father, a stern man with a white beard.

O'Neill sat me down by himself, and we touched drinking cups. "A pleasant ride from Dublin you would have?" he said carelessly.

"Very pleasant, O'Neill," I replied.

"It is sometimes not easy these days to reach Dungannon from Dublin—but, of course, you would have a safe-conduct from the new Lord Deputy?"

Here was the deft half-query, the first of many that would winnow my news like corn from chaff. And I felt rise in me that strange national dourness that ever sullenly sets itself against winnowing. The men about me were silent, waiting for my answer, but instead of answering, I put a half-question of my own.

"There was a friend of your cause, O'Neill, on the borders of the Pale—Colum O'More?"

"He and his clan."

"He is dead."

"Dead! Colum O'More dead?"

"Slain in Dublin by an English officer."

"What dog did it?" It was Donn Maguire cried that.

"One Captain Cosby of Cong."

"Cosby the Killer! They say he wears a mail-shirt in his sleep."

O'More had been one of O'Neill's trusted chiefs. The word of his death was a shock to every one who heard—except, it might be, to O'Neill himself. O'Neill had too much on his mind to be shocked by the death of one man, and, in his time, had helped to slay Irish chiefs to foster his single cause.

"The man who killed O'More," he said quietly, "did disservice to his queen. With Offaly and the Glens roused, Dublin will need a full garrison. Well, David Gordon?"

"I was friendly with O'More," I went on. "I had to flee from Dublin—"

"You are safe from the queen's men here," said O'Neill, a small touch of pride in his voice.

But that word *safe* nettled me.

"I did not come for safety," I said, I fear ungraciously, "but to offer my services to my cousin."

"I am your cousin too, David Gordon," said O'Neill gently.

"I have little to offer you, O'Neill," I said glumly.

"Well said, Scot!" cried Crawford. "That is the hilt of an Andrea Ferrara you have there, and besides being a sword it is a good one."

"Look!" I cried then, so that I must be understood. "I had Cosby open to a plain lunge above the gorget, and I missed by three fingers. That is the kind of swordsman I am." Let me say now that the missing of that lunge had rankled in me. If my father had been alive he would never have forgiven me bungling that plain thrust.

O'Neill put his hand on my shoulder.

"Swording is only an art," he said. "It is the man I look for."

"For what I am worth," I blurted out, glad to get it over.

His hand pressed.

"You are mine," he said. "Leave it to me. Come out now in the sunlight—these boys are getting noisy."

MANY of his followers were still at table, and the young ones were beginning to lift voices in song. O'Neill, Maguire, Crawford and I went out on the grass.

We sat down on the garden-bench, and O'Neill was no longer indirect in his questioning. "What is your news out of Dublin, Cousin David?"

I knew what he meant. "De Burgh has brought reënforcements of five thousand

men, with culverin and mangonels," I told him.

"A pleasant peace-time force!" said old Maguire dryly.

O'Neill's eyes darkened and deepened. "What quality?" he asked me.

"Three thousand veteran troops and two thousand from the southern train-bands."

"The veterans are as good as the best," said Crawford judiciously, "but the youngsters do not like cold steel."

"Cold steel is better than hot lead from top of a wall, with a hard Scots head safe behind the same wall," said Maguire with stern humor. This was a half jibe at Crawford, who was noted for the art he had acquired in the French wars of defending duns.

O'Neill took no notice. His eyes were on mine.

"I was only eight days in Dublin," I replied to that waiting look, "but already the train-bands were being drafted into the southern garrisons."

"And the veterans held in Dublin?"

"For the time. And the day before I left, de Burgh had a council with his Connacht leaders."

"The Connacht leaders! The full leash! I thank you, cousin. You have already served me well."

"You may thank a dead man, O'Neill."

We were silent for a space, and O'Neill in a muse of his own. He lifted his head at last and looked at Crawford, his eyes crinkling. "What would you do, Hugh, if you were the English Lord Deputy?"

"God forgive us, O'Neill, but I would do something."

"The direct thing?"

"Aye so! If I had five thousand reënforcements I would come straight at you and make you burn Dungannon a second time."

"And we would be giving you Clontibret over again—you bloody loyalist," said Maguire.

"What would yourself do, Maguire?"

"I would be thinking it out to myself," said Maguire cannily. "But I know what Hugh Roe O'Neill would be doing if he were in de Burgh's place."

"Go on, Prince of Ulster," mocked Crawford.

"He would wait till harvest, when the clans do be scattered in field and shieling, come down full force through the Gap-of-the-North, and put all Ulster under fire and sword."

"Surely," agreed O'Neill, "that is the wise plan. But note that Conyers Clifford in Connacht is also eager to come down on O'Donnell through the western gap at Bellashanny."

"And Hugh Roe O'Donnell, my darling, will be saying a word or two to that," said Maguire with satisfaction.

"With his clan at the harvest? No." O'Neill turned to Crawford. "Hugh, we will put you behind a stone wall. I am going to lend you to O'Donnell—you and your Scots—with word that you are to garrison Bellashanny and the fords of Saimhor while the clans are in shieling. We shall be attacked on two fronts, as I see it, and if you lose Bellashanny you will let Clifford in on my rear."

"I will not let him if I can stop him," said Crawford mildly.

And then O'Neill turned to me. "I have work for you too, David Gordon. You are now sept to O'Neill, and O'Neill will have to thole the brunt of the coming fight. Your cousin, Donal Ballagh, is in Galway, and his foster-brother, Calvagh MacManus, holds Dungiven. There you will go with a written note from me. With Calvagh you will warn the clan and help to lead it when the onset comes." He slapped me on the shoulder. "And that is enough for one day. We will go to the ladies now and try that new ruby wine out of Lisbon, and hear the harpers play. Come, brothers!"

Thus it was that the great O'Neill gave me work to do.

CHAPTER VI

WAR PLANS

THERE now was the O'Cahan stronghold of Dungiven standing above the shallow clear waters of the Roe, and there was I, David Gordon, riding down to it, two days out of Dungannon, and the high moors behind me.

I had stayed the best part of a week in O'Neill's camp and had learned to

value the force and prudence of the great leader; and, despite myself, I had become friendly with young Doncadh Donn Maguire. I was his discovery, to be taken possession of in his own impulsive way, with no minding my silence —or no noticing it in the spate of his own talk. He took me on a raid on quarter-grown wolf cubs into the fastnesses of Sliev Gallion; he took me eel-fishing on Lough Neagh; he even tried, but failed, to get me amongst the damsels of the house; and finally he accompanied me on my road as far as the head of Cairntogher Pass. He would have come all the way to Dungiven if O'Neill had not strictly warned him that he must be back among his own clan in three days, and that warning he dared not disobey. He told me a good deal about Donal Ballagh, my cousin: that, though he was something younger than I was, Donal had been made full chief of the O'Cahans on the death of his father, my uncle, a year past; that he had neither brother nor sister; that he was still unmarried . . .

"Not that he hates the fair ones," Doncadh said, "but there be too many to choose from, and one should be in no hurry. I hear the Galway lasses are bonny, with a certain dash of Spain to them. 'Tis amongst them I would be, with Donal, but for the old devil, my father. He advised Hugh Roe that the two of us would be aye in trouble and, maybe, cause blood and scandal. Did you ever hear the like?"

"I did."

"My sober fellow! A great pity Donal is not at home to teach you some things. Man, Dathi, you will like him. He is as tall as you are, but black in the hair, and he can sing a song and the mead to his thrapple—here—and fight! him laughing the whole tulzie and his broadsword shearing casques."

"He will have no cause to like me," said I. "I never shore a casque; all the love I ever saw was an ugly game; a crow and I sing much alike, and twice already you have made my head buzz with metheglin."

"Wait you! If love comes as easy to you as lifting a piggin of beer, many the man will be jealous—and did I not see you touch Hughie Crawford twice in a minute yon play of swords we had?"

And now, here was I, facing Dungiven across the water, and I was at the end of my long road. A month ago I had left Arras and barren days, and though luck had played a quirky game with me all the way, yet had she led me onwards towards a life worth living. I had only my horse and sword and cloak, but the future was in my own hands.

Yet was I sorry, too, that my cousin Donal Ballagh was not at home. His absence made me strangely lonely and of small account. Calvagh MacManus, his foster-brother, might be a good man, but he was not of my blood, and it might be that he would resent the incoming of a half-Scot with the authority of O'Neill in his pauch. That is why I hesitated and drew rein at the margin of the Roe, and looked across at the dun.

A sunny afternoon at the end of May, and everything was quiet and still! The blackbird's song was done and the thrush not ready for his evening trill, and there came to my ears only the soft and lonely murmur of the river—a small, apart, uncanny, quiet chuckle at something not human. It put weight of childish loneliness on me and held me there in a thoughtless sort of gloom based outside all life.

Up a long, paved causeway beyond the ford was the gray-stone, squat, battlemented tower of the dun; a wing of wall ran either side of it with a guard-tower at each end, and it was pierced in the middle by an arch opening into darkness. The slope right and left of the causeway was of worn grass and clear of all habitation, but round the side of the northern tower was a scattering of wooden and clay bothies —a whole hamlet. And then I heard children laugh, and my eyes followed the course of the stream to where a clan of them were wading knee-deep in the clear water, intent on a pursuit of eels under the flat slabs of mossy stone—a game I knew. It was a quiet and happy scene, and the gloom was only in myself.

By the side of the big arch a guarding kern sat on a block of wood, busy smooth-chafing the haft of an ax with

a fragment of glass, and his long light halberd leaned on the wall close behind him. Very particularly he was giving his work the final touch, his hand moving in little stroking movements. He extended the haft at a slant, looked along it, one eye shut, and then his eye lifted in line and fixed on me, and the other eye remained shut for yet a draw of breath. Slowly he got to his feet, the glass fragment tinkling as it fell, and slowly his spare hand slipped back towards the grip of his sparth. At that I set Benmee at the ford and splashed across at a walk, and at a walk rode quietly up the causeway, throwing back my cloak to show my sword in sheath and no weapon in hand.

Two length away I checked Benmee, and the kern, a lean lathy lad, stepped in front of the arch.

"Where your road, friend?" he inquired in friendly enough fashion.

"Calvagh MacManus with word from O'Neill."

"God save him! Calvagh MacManus? So—so! O'Neill would not be hearing the news yet. You are welcome, tall hero. Calvagh is within the court. I will take your horse."

He yelled in through the arch, and another kern came tumbling out of a side passage to help him.

I WALKED in under the arch, and came out into the full sunlight of the bailey. It was not more than half the size of O'Neill's great one, and a glance showed that there was no wife or woman in this household. It was the stronghold of single men and soldiers. Buildings of weathered wood ran round three sides; one half of it was paved with cobbles, the other was packed clay. In the middle was a big high-pitched building with walls of heavy oak, roof of rye thatch, and wide unglazed window openings; and the frames of windows and open door were intricately carved in scroll-work, and colored red ochre; here and there, in corners, grass and weeds grew undisturbed.

Before this middle house, on the packed earth, two young men were engaged in a putting contest with a smooth round stone, big as a child's head. One was a middle-sized powerful figure, naked to the waist, with a shag of red hair on chest and arms. The other was tall—very tall—and in a short-sleeved linen tunic. Nearly a score of men were looking on, and an old white-haired, long-bearded fellow was holding forth, while a black Austin friar made fun of him.

I walked slowly—and something stiffly after my long ride—towards them, my cloak thrown back on my shoulders. The tall young fellow was balancing for the putt, and, all eyes being fixed on him, none saw me. With smooth and easy power he pivoted from foot to foot, and the stone went sailing in a huge curve.

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" laughed the friar happily. "Beat that, if beating is in you, Calvagh, son of Manus."

The old white-beard lifted his voice —a most surprising volume of a voice. "A good cast—good enough! But the full spade short of his father's best—God rest him!"

"Ho! Ho! Ho!" the priest again laughed. "Was there ever a son to beat his father?"

The tall lad strode across and playfully shook a clenched hand in the old fellow's beard.

"You big-paunched, bellowing old shield-striker!" he cried. "Two years ago you said the same thing of a cast a full spade short of that one."

The old fellow grinned unashamed and opened his mouth for retort—and thereupon his eyes fixed themselves on me. And there they widened and his mouth was no wider. Then he blinked rapidly, gathered his look close on me, and hurriedly crossed himself.

"Blessed the day is!" he half-whispered, and even his half-whisper had volume. "Your father come back to life in all his might!"

The tall young man turned quickly, and we looked at each other. Who he was I did not guess, but I knew that he was not Calvagh MacManus. The broad red man was MacManus. This was no common man, I knew, but if his hair had been red-gold I might have taken him for the famous O'Donnell,

ally of O'Neill. I think that that man there was the bonniest man I ever saw —I have ever seen. He was tall and supple like a spear; with a mass of black curls over a white square of brow; his face had a healthy pallor, and his keen dark-blue eyes were well set under black brows—a keen lean face with a fine salty humor to it. There and then he set alight in me that spark of liking that must come at the first glance or not at all.

We stood there a few strides apart and looked at each other, and all the others were still, too, except white-pow, who had his hand a-tug in his beard. The young chief made the first move. He came at me slowly, but directly, and placed his two hands gently down on my shoulders—and our eyes were level.

"I know you," he said. "You are my cousin David Gordon, out of Scotland."

"But—"

"I am Donal Ballagh O'Cahan."

"But—"

"I know. I got back from Galway yesterday." His eyes crinkled. "And the devil never came faster!"

"I AM David Gordon," said I then. "I am from Arras in Picardy to see you—cousin."

His hands pressed my shoulders. "You are welcome a thousand times." A little glow came behind his eyes, and I knew that I was welcome.

A lump came up to my throat, and I could not help my eyebrows twitching.

The white-beard was at my cousin's shoulder.

"I knew—I knew first," his great voice proclaimed. "He is the dead spit of your father and he young."

"God forbid!" said I, swallowing the lump. "He was not the ugliest man in Ulster!"

"He was that," he boomed, "and the best man at your right hand or at your left in the same place—and the best caster of the heavy stone."

Donal Ballagh saw that I was touched. He swung round to my side, his hand on my arm.

"This young fellow of four score or five," he presented, "is one Turlough, son of Teaclan, and once on a time he used sing a lay and pluck a harp string —and thinks he can do both yet. And this is Father Senan of the Priory, who says our prayers for us—and his own —when he has time from the fishing."

The priest came forward. He was well past middle years, but sturdy, and there was not a gray hair in his strong brown beard. He wore the black frock of the Austin friars, and his hair was close cut, in the Celtic tonsure, from ear to ear. "I knew your father, David Gordon," he said. "This old fellow, Turlough—he was not so old then—the two of us

rowed the young pair over Bann Flu the night they went from here." His blue-gray eyes searched me with a wistful look. "Is there anything of Nuala ni Cahan in you?"

"No," I said. "She was gentle and beautiful"; and I smiled to his look.

His eyes filled and his mouth quivered.

"Ah!" he cried, "there she is—there she is now, deep down in you. Do I not remember her, and she smiling? I was young then, and I loved her myself, God forgive me! Your father was a better man. Is he well?"

"He is dead," I told him.

"His soul with God—and with her!"

"Amen," said Donal softly. "We are in like case, cousin." Then he lifted his voice. "Here, Calvagh—Calvagh MacManus, my foster-brother, who by his easy ways in this dun has put a month's work before me to thin the paunches of these fellows you see grinning."

The garrison gallowglasses laughed, and in that laughter was the admiring, confident note that showed that this stronghold was a happy place for men. MacManus had pulled his tunic over his head, and he came and took my hand with a murmured word of welcome. He had a square face, and a grim one for a man so young, and all feeling was now hid behind a gray eye. In after days, when we grew to know each other, he told me that he was filled with a passion of jealousy that first hour. That I can understand, knowing the closeness of the foster-tie.

My cousin was considerate of me to the end. He drew me towards the door of the mid-house. "A long road behind you, my light! You will have a bite now and sup, and we with you. Time enough for talk. Come, brothers!"

And so I was made welcome to Dungiven.

THE inside of the mid-house was one great high room. It had a stone chimney, a bare floor of hewn boards, a long oaken table on trestles, a scatter of straw-bottomed chairs and backless benches, and all round it were uncurtained alcoves wherein were wooden sleeping benches. It was, in fact, the living-room of the dun, whose cold stone chambers were mostly used for stores and armaments. The Gael never could bide in a dungeon of stone.

In there they plied me with cold venison, barley-meal bread, and *coirm* ale, and joined me at the eating—Donal, Calvagh, Turlough, and the friar. And they talked, and presently I found myself talking too, giving a lame enough account of France, my father's death, and my journey as far as Dungannon. When I got myself as far as that place, I remembered for the first time that day that I had a written message from O'Neill. I fished it from my satchel—a folded scrap of vellum with the Red-Hand of O'Neill stamped on a splash of wax.

Donal Ballagh looked at the name on the outside and flicked it across to Calvagh MacManus. "It might be that Hugh Roe wishes to bestow a daughter on you, Calvagh. Take a look!"

Calvagh growled.

"It could be that woman will trouble us soon enough in this dun," he said, and I felt my cousin stir at my side. Calvagh looked over the writing and handed it back, and Donal read the formal Gaelic aloud.

Calvagh MacManus, friend. David Gordon bears this, cousin in the first degree to O'Cahan, and my kinsman as well and in my service.—"Ah ha! Red Earl—not servant but sept."—*He is a swordsman of skill*—"Not so!" said I, "but a bungler."—*But he lacks experience of war. I bestow him in your command.*—"The wise fox he is."—*Take heed now. The truce with the Sassenach they will break at the harvest time, and they will strike in on our front and on O'Donnell's front, I think. It will be hard fighting and our lack will be trained horse. I look to the O'Cahan clan for a mounted standard, and this my kinsman you will find useful to teach sword-play against the coming of your chieftain and your brother. At your service. O'Neill*—"And that is that! A wise letter. Hugh knows."

Donal sat there staring at the scrap of vellum, and a faraway look came in his eyes. "War in the harvest time," he murmured.

"War—war—war! June—July—August! Three months—short enough and long enough—if word comes . . ." He twisted the letter in his hands, still musing, and then, suddenly, threw off his introspection that had brought a touch of color to his face. "Three months!" he cried, "and we with our work before us. —I am glad that you are here, David."

"I am glad too, Donal," said I.

And I was glad.

I WAS happy at Dungiven. Though I have known happiness many the day since then, and though a certain pair of eyes will read this writing, I will say in this place that never have I known more content than I knew at Dungiven that summer. I was among my own kin, was acquainted of their lives and the lively run of their thoughts, and I was accepted as a man amongst men. All that makes for the only living content there is, the only content that is necessary in any place under the sun.

And better than all, a close tie grew between my cousin and me. From the first minute I liked him, and from that minute his keen mind got below my unprepossessing surface. Strangely enough, I was his nearest male relation. The main stem of the O'Cahan was a thin one at that period, and, other than an old uncle living at Derry Columcill, he had no men relatives nearer than cousins once removed. Of these and more distant kind he had a multitude, for the O'Cahan was a long-tailed clan and could muster a thousand able-bodied fighting men.

Donal Ballagh was full of life and eagerness, and life and eagerness were in me too, though they never showed in the face of day. He liked nothing better than good talk, good wit, the singing of songs, skillful fingering of chanter, the plucking of strings—aye! and in its place the downing of measures of ale, metheglin, and a heady Spanish wine. And for all my stolid front I too liked to hear good talk, and was a grand listener and a putter-in of a word on occasion to make sure that the argument stay on the road; and I could laugh at a sally —when I saw it—for all that I was a Scot; and I could hold down my own share of ale for being the same Scot; and on the big pipes, though I could not finger a pibroch, I knew a tune or two that were new in Ciannachta.

We were great talkers in Dungiven. On my first coming we talked for three days back-and-fore, and after that, as they say, we began talking. That household of men was the grand place for dispute and discussion and wordy pleasant warfare. For I have noticed that men talk more than women when women are not of the company, and that men do not talk freely, even on free subjects, when women are in the house. Oh! but the good times we had within that dun on the Roe.

As has been said, it was a man's house. Women from the township came in to cook and clean and wash, but no woman slept in dun or bailey. That was the custom, and no man thought of breaking it—except one.

At this minute I can shut my eyes and see that big room in the mid-house of a long summer evening. The low sun would be shining over the defending wall in through door and windows, and in a little while after that the room would be in a luminous shadow. Supper time it would be and every bench and seat occupied by an easy brotherly company, not troubled by thought of rank or degree, yet not unaware of pride of race. The broad strength of the Gaelic would make a guttural boom and the high-pitched Gaelic laugh echo up amongst the collar-braces of the roof. Food and drink would be on the board in princely quantity and be partaken of hugely.

Presently, from outside would come the heart-stirring shrill of the chanter and thrill of the drones as a couple or three pipers strutted and turned; or Turlough Mac an Teaclan would run his hooked fingers across the weird strings of the harp and make cold shivers run over us with those queer, plucking rippling runs, and then he might declaim in his great voice an ode to some dead O'Cahan, or dree a lament sadder than the long waves of the sea, or sing a song with a refrain that we all joined in—a song that could go on endlessly and put a strange mystic glamor on us; or I

might finger a string, and some swack lad jump on the board to dance a graceful and intricate step-dance from the hips down; or when the ale began to bite some one would strike up a gay sardonic air wedded to frankly ribald words that no woman should hear.

And then the music would cease for a while, and, after a silence, talk would again break forth and laughter ring. And then the gloaming would deepen into the tremulous half-dark of the summer night, and one by one men would stroll away, or slip away, or stretch themselves out on the sleeping benches in the alcoves, and the table would be left to the center group of the household—Donal, Calvagh, Turlough, Friar Senan, and me.

There we would talk of the coming campaign and make plans for it, or deride made plans, drawing example from fights of the past and men that fought them; and then, when all were gone, it became a custom for Donal and me to go out in the bailey, pace up and down shoulder to shoulder, and speak of things between ourselves.

In these walks together I told Donal all there was to know of my past, which was little, and he told me some of the many things he had seen and done. He had been as far as Greenwich Court with O'Neill; he had been to Lisbon and Cadiz in his uncle's ship out of Derry-Columcill; and, though he was younger than I was, he had led his clan in half a score of stark fights, notably at the Ford-of-Biscuits and Clontibret.

But there was one episode in his life that he could not be got to dwell on: the recent breaking of hostage at Galway. Every man—and every woman too—of the clan was curious to know the why and the how of that business, but all that he would say was that he had had a private quarrel with Rickard the Sassenach, Baron of Dunkellin, and that Governor Bingham had taken sides with the loyalist and put Donal himself behind bars, thus breaking the terms of hostage; whereupon Donal had broken prison and made his way home by secret roads he knew.

What the subject of the quarrel was no one in Dungiven was told, but I, for one, could make a near guess. Often and often in the midst of talk I had watched Donal go into the spell of day-dreaming where the face smiles and grows wistful. And sometimes, when we were alone, I might murmur: "Galway town and it far away!" Whereupon he would start and flush, or even set on me with half-playful fury. Then would follow a tough wrestle, where neither of us held advantage unless I secured top grip and could use shoulder weight.

And also among the maids of the clan—and of these there were many of his own blood and caste—he was no longer the frank trifler. Doubtless others saw as much as I did, or more, but after the manner of the breed, no one dared say a word till O'Cahan took it on himself to open the subject.

AFTER ten days or a fortnight in Dungiven, Donal took me on a round of visits to the scattered septs of his clan, and made sure that I became accepted as one entitled to all the rights of the blood. And as he progressed he arranged for a gathering at Dungiven of his chiefs and captains.

There for three days, in the intervals of terrific hurling matches and profuse feastings, were discussed the plans of the clan for harvest and the campaign. The crops were to be cut and lifted as they ripened, and the women and the old must do more than their share of the harvesting. This man, and that, and the other, by name and degree, had to equip ten, twenty, forty gallowglasses and so many kern, and hold them ready for the hosting. Such and such a one could mount three or six or ten horsemen. When—now? Next week? Fine, surely! Send them down to the dun, horse and man. Horse are needed and horse take time to train. . . .

So it was that in a short time we had a squadron of fifty horse at Dungiven, and lively times with them. Donal, Calcagh and I spent hours marshaling and drilling, and, with a new enthusiasm, I set about teaching swordplay on horseback: how to avoid the arm-wrench of the full lunge, how to draw the too-eager first swing and follow the parry

I started warily.

with the deadly backhand cut, how to make sure that though your man overrode you, you left empty saddle behind.

But first, and for my own prestige, I had to prove to these smiters from all Ciannachta that I was fit to teach. Before them all one fine evening Donal tried me out. Donal was reputed an able sworder, had learned Scots play from Hugh Crawford, single sword practice from the Queen's O'Reilly of Breffni during a truce, and rapier tierce and carte that time he was in London. I had a full measure of nervousness that evening, for O'Neill's word had gone out that I was a skilled man, and, with this friendly critical crowd of blooded fighters looking on, I felt stiffer and clumsier than ever.

I started warily. I felt the ground with the flat of my feet. I kept a lock on the blades to try for Donal's possible weakness of wrist—and did not find it. I parried carefully, kept solely to the lunges of ritual, and gave ground more than I might. Donal was wary too, for his accepted reputation was at stake. But our blood was young and in time it warmed up in spite of us. It warmed up more than it should, I fear, and in two minutes we had the men shouting.

That bout was as near the real thing as to make no matter. Luckily, wise old Turlough made us use Scots play with targes, or we would surely have drawn blood in our eagerness. Not that either of us lost temper, but we forgot, at the time, that our blades had killing edge and point. At no time did I feel that I held Donal at advantage, and at the best I did not attack as often as he did, though, later, he insisted that at the end my encounter kept him wondering.

A prick or a slash would have been the sure result if Father Senan, coming in from his fishing, after looking on for

half a minute, had not thrust the butt of his salmon-rod between us. We drew back and panted, and Donal laughed, while I felt my head to see if I still wore it. Then my cousin threw his arm around me and I patted his shoulder, and I was accepted as a sworder; while for the rest of the evening the bout was discussed in all its aspects, some holding that in actual fight Donal would have taken me early on, and others that my patience and strength of wrist must win in the end.

There was one man in Dungiven who, I think, loved me better than he loved his chief. That man was Friar Senan. I was my mother's son, and he fathered me. He was a wise, kindly, sturdy old man, and if he had any fault it was an inordinate love of angling and a lack of patience if any one dared to dispute with him on that art. From observation he had devised a new method, where his lure imitated the natural fly that brings the fish clean out of water in a bonny silver curve. No one mentioned garden-worm or maggot-gentle in his presence unless warfare was intended—and frequently it was. He took charge of me from the beginning; he taught me to fish in his own fashion, extolled the virtue of a small fly with a woodcock wing and a moth body, of another gray-brown one for early June, and a red-brown one for treacherous August.

With all his quiet wisdom he set my feet on the road of understanding; in the confessional he used sit back and talk to me of things that had nothing to do with the shriving of sins, so that my friends twitted me on the grievous load that kept me so long on my knees; and when I smiled, as was not now so infrequent, his bearded face would light up.

So I was happy at Dungiven.

CHAPTER VII

"I AM READY NOW, DONAL"

I COME now to an evening in July. A fine clear evening, with the faint hum of midges in the air, after a cloudy week of thundery showers.

Looking back on that evening, I am wondering if this story should not have begun then, for all that I have written up to this is no more than a slow prelude to my real story—as will be seen.

Donal and I, with Father Senan, had spent the afternoon at the fishing down the full-flowing, amber reaches of the Roe, and the fishing had been good. With a silver and blue-hackled lure tied for us by the old priest we had made spoil among a fresh run of salmon, round-girthed hen-fish, up from northern sea.

Late in the evening, and hungry as hawks, we fared dunwards, our catch—at least a score—slung in panniers over the withers of a hill pony.

Ferdoragh, the gate-ward, came down to the ford to meet us.

"A messenger here for you, Donal Ballagh O'Cahan," he shouted above the splash we made, the water up to our knees.

"From O'Neill?" Donal inquired quickly.

"All the way from Galway, he says."

Donal checked in ankle-depth of water, checked dead-still for one draw of breath, and then stepped out on dry ground.

"We will see him," he said, carefully quiet. He made no hurry. He said no word to us—did not even look at us—but, where he and I might try a race uphill to the arch, he plodded with a steady stolidity that I had never before noticed in him. Father Senan looked across at me behind him, frowned half-smilingly, and shook his tonsured head.

The household was at supper when we got in, and the messenger from Galway was at home in that company. He was no townsman, but a big, black-bearded fellow of the gallowglass caste, with the hugest pair of hands I ever saw in a man.

At the moment they were enveloping a wooden ale-piggin' and I did not see the piggin till he laid it down as he rose to his feet.

"A writing for O'Cahan," he said, and fumbled in the breast of his rough crotal tunic.

"You are welcome, Tadg Ironhand," greeted Donal gently.

The messenger tendered the folded missive. It was stained with the sweat of his body, I saw, but also I saw that it was tied with a rose-red riband of silk, from which hung a small seal.

Donal took it, glanced at it quickly, and brought his eyes keenly to the man's face.

"All well, Ironhand?" he inquired with significance.

"Well, surely, my heart—and bell-metal for soundness."

Donal looked all round the room, and every man there of us had his eye somewhere else. He looked at me, and I was loosing the thongs of my wet footgear. I had soon fallen into the homely fashion of going about all day hoseless in the easy rawhide brogans of the Gael. In the evening we used kick them off, or prise them off if we had been in water, bathe our feet in the run of the Roe, and for the rest of the time pad about barefoot in the soft dust that was pleasant and cool between our toes. These men of war were notably clean of habit, and knew the worth of cleanliness in hard campaigning. In that summer weather they went about as nearly naked as they might in decency, and in the warm nights slept stark naked on the sleeping benches. Only in the chill of dawn would they groan and reach blindly for war-cloak.

Donal did not hesitate for long. His fingers closing tightly on his letter, he strode out of the room, across the bailey, and within the door of the tower. Leaning to my hide thongs, I could see, through a window, the crenellated battlements of the keep, and presently his black head ran like a bead among them. Up there only the far-away sky, a half-moon still wan in the light, and a sparrow-hawk asoar with fluttering pinion-tips might look on as he read.

The room was silent and still all around me—not as much as a breath lifted. I prised off my wet footgear, straightened up, and because of the tension in and around me, let out a thundering bellow: "Will no full-bellied goat's offspring give us our supper?"

Out of the sudden startle and clatter that followed came the voice of the Galway Tadg. "My hand! I would not like to be the man that would starve you after that."

There was laughter then, and the tension broke. For the first time I became aware that all these men knew as well as I what had weighed on our chief's mind.

I WAS still eating when Donal came back. He sat down quietly at my side and ate with me. He ate hungrily enough of what was before him, but I doubt if he knew what he was eating, for he picked clean the bones of a coney, a food he despised. And he imbibed great draughts of ale, and with it put away his silence, growing more than usually gay and light of tongue, and calling on Turlough Mac an Teaclan to play on his harp. And old Turlough ran his hand across the strings, and wistful lovely notes came about us, and deep true notes that made the heart stir. . . . And he sang, only above a whisper, but a whisper that filled the room, the lovely and tender love song of Bright Una.

Girl, now that my eyes
Again shall look long on you,
Girl, now that my heart
Is athirst in the drouth for you,
Girl, now that my soul
Yearns deep for the deeps in you,
Now, while my life has a wing,
Do I sing my song to you.

Eyes, deep as the dark of the sky,
Eyes, bright as the sheen of the sea,
Face, pale with the pallor of dreams,
Hair, flame of red bronze breeze-free—
I am drowned in your eyes and your dreams,
The flame of your hair is in me.

Girl, if never my eyes
Again might look long on you,
Girl, if ever my heart
Is drained dry for the drouth of you,
Girl, if ever my soul
Is lost for the loss of you,
Still, though my life has no wing,
Will I sing my song to you.

And Donal, head in hand, looked out of drugged eyes and forgot us all.

When the song was done the half-dark was about us and men moved quietly away, so that in a short while we were alone, Donal and I. And after a time I got to my feet and went out

alone and sadly under the moon and the thin stars, and as I walked I found Donal at my side. We paced up and down, as was our custom, but for long and long we said nothing.

Donal spoke first, after clearing his throat twice.

"Tomorrow," he said calmly, "I leave you in command."

"As you command, O'Cahan," said I formally.

"I will be away for a time."

I had no word to say to that, and after a pause he went on. "I am going down into Connacht—I suppose you know."

I had to help him.

"I know you have a letter there," I blurted out, "twisting your heartstrings, and I know that it is the letter of a woman."

"Who will be my wife," he said softly.

"Oh, lucky woman!" I cried in spite of me, a somber weight on my heart. I was losing this lad that I loved.

At that he put his hand within my arm and pulled my shoulder against his.

"It is a pity that I did not tell you before now," he excused himself. "There is nothing that should be hidden between us, brother."

"Tell me nothing," I urged. "I do not know how love alters a man."

He chuckled softly, "You will know soon enough, graybeard."

"I will not," I said firmly—almost savagely.

AND then he began to talk more freely, the half-dark hiding the color in his face. Round-about talk in the beginning. "You know hostage is held a pleasant custom . . . O'Neil and O'Donnell could find a score to take the yoke, and had to be wise as ten foxes to choose their six. Donn Maguire, our light-head, nearly came to cursing his father over it. The six of us, Garv O'Donnell, Bainne O'Neill, MacWilliam Oge, and the rest were without a care, free as air within the hostage law, and we were treated with the best. Great easy times we had! . . . Galway is a fine town, with Spanish ships in and out—and Corrib and Clifden water full of fish, the Joyces thick with deer, and Aran Isles over yonder and the hookers of Galway to sail out to them and see Hy-Brasil. . . . We jaunted up to Menlo, across to Athenree, down to Dunkellin—and as far as Cashlean-na-Kirka on Upper Corrib. Man, David! there is a dark-haired one at that place—Eithne, daughter of the great Bevinda O'Flaherty—would make your tough heart turn over—"

"Is that the one?" I stopped him.

"No, *the* one is Amy Burc, daughter of Rickard the Sassenach of Dunkellin."

"The man you quarreled with?"

"And she the cause. I met—my lady—at a reception at Bingham's in Galway, and after at Casrlean-na-Kirka and at her home in Dunkellin—and otherwheres." He paused, as if thinking of all these meetings, and went on inadequately. "We came to think alike—and knew it. We did nothing underhand. I spoke her father, that long narrow man. He would have none of me for a son-in-law. He said so. He said it at great length. He is ten times more of the loyalist than the old dog-fox his father of Clanricard, and he gave me all his choice thoughts on us rebel dogs of the North. What he said I would stand from no other man, and will not stand from him again. He is nothing to me or to Amy any more. That was in Galway. . . . We decided to wed and say nothing till the hostage time expired—she decided as much as I did. Foolish we were, maybe?"

"Maybe you were," said I.

"We failed, anyway. A spy was about us somewhere. The dawn we were to be wed I slipped out of my quarters straight into the waiting arms of Bingham's guard, and five-ten minutes after that I was behind iron bars. Amy, as I learned later, was whisked off to Athlone under the wardship of the governor, Sir Conyers Clifford. What was I to do?"

"You came home."

"And broke prison and hostage at the same time. Not a hard task, either. No tight guard was kept on me; even a half-word came quietly that as soon as the father was back in Dunkellin hold and the daughter safe in Athlone, I might walk out into freedom and no

one say a word. That might suit Bingham, as he it was who had broken the laws of hostage in another man's quarrel. But it did not go with my plans to put myself back under the yoke. . . . Tadg Ironhand slung me a long sgian through the bars a floor above ground—and my gaoler was not caring greatly for the point of it—so I walked out soft and easy, met Tadg and had a talk with him, and got home here a day before yourself. Easy as a drink of wine, David."

"MAYBE it was easy enough for you," said I, "but not as easy as all that."

"Easy enough in truce time. But it was not so easy to hide my secret from all the old women that are in this dun, and one of them David Gordon. And yet it was good to me hat you should feel my trouble—and my anxiety for word from Athlone. That word came today, a letter from my lady herself, by the hand of Tadg, her foster-father." He touched the breast of his tunic. "As long as she was in Clifford's ward inside the walls of Athlone nothing could be done, but now she is back with her father in a strong place he has down beside the Clare border. But not for long! Rickard does not trust me —or her. In ten days—a fortnight at most—he is taking her to Dublin and sending her from there to Greenwich Court in Ormonde's train. . . . And she says, 'I am ready now, Donal. Will you come'?"

The pride in his voice stirred me.

"By God!" said I, "did she say that?"

"Her very words. And tomorrow I go."

"Alone?"

"Alone I would like to go, but alone I might miss the one chance. She is well guarded, and Dunkellin has a garrison of picked Sassenach in the place. I do hope to snatch her single-handed, but a sudden sally might be the only chance for us. I am taking ten of your horsemen — and Father Senan — the smallest force I dare trust for what may be needed."

"And Calvagh MacManus?"

"No. I leave Calvagh with you."

"In that case I come with you. It would not be a nice thing to put me in command over your foster-brother." There was ever a small jealousy there.

Donal peered in my face.

"Is that why you would come?" he queried prickingly.

I did not answer that.

"I might fail you in a fight—" I said.

He stopped me with his hand. "Listen, David! There is no risk in taking ten or twenty men to Dunkellin. The truce still lasts, and we could move hither and yon through clans not unfriendly. But once success—or failure—gives the alarm we shall be in the very nick of danger all that twisted road back to O'Donnell's Saimhor line. In ones and twos we must steal our way by roads we know—and you—"

"Look!" said I dourly. "Do you command me to stay?"

"I do not."

"Then I come."

"Come, then, pighead," he cried at me, and shook me with both his hands. "Man, David, I am foolish to let you, but I want you at my shoulder—in fight if fighting comes, and in peace when Senan speaks the words over my lady and me. You are my nearest kin—and nearest me too—and second in Dungiven whatever befalls. David, the thing I am doing will make no difference between us two? You know that?"

"I know that," I lied stoutly.

CHAPTER VIII

"O'CAHAWN! O'CAHAWN!"

ALL through the night we had ridden hard, and the horses were dead weary. Even my own hardy Benmee faltered now and then. They were weary although, before making this last long burst, we had given them a four hours' rest in a hazel clump well back from, and looking down on, the Galway road. While we had lain in that clump a strung-out, careless cavalcade of men and ladies had ambled by citywards on the road below us.

"Bingham, very like, giving one of his

feasts—the gay old badger!" had said Donal, and frowned at a thought of his own.

The horses were spent because we had come all the long way from Dungiven at a breaking pace—down to the narrows of the Erne, where we had swum across into Breffni, round by Loch Gara through MacDermot and Costello country—and rough country at that—and so skirting the MacWilliam and MacTheobald lands, where at last we had to move warily. But luck had been with us all the road, and now, this fifth day, we were on the last long leg.

We had crossed the Galway road with the fall of night—a clear night with the moon near the full—and thereafter Tadg Ironhand had led the way and in a hurry. That country south of the Galway road was flat and heavily wooded, and among the woods were spreads of dangerous marshes dark under the moon. But Tadg knew his way. He kept trending westwards and still westwards under the curtain of the trees, and some time before the lift of dark came down to the margin of a wide plain, a waste of heather that whispered sadly under the dawn wind. There we halted and gave our horses breathing space.

"We must be at the other side of this before the light comes." Tadg spoke hoarsely and swayed loosely in the saddle. "God! for the sleep I will be having then."

Donal placed a hand against his shoulder.

"Tadg Ironhand, my jewel!" he said warmly.

This gallowglass must have iron in all of him as well as in his hands, for to our five he had ten weary days behind him.

That waste was luckily a dry heath, with here and there a low humplock of grass. The heather was old and stiff, in places up to our girths, and our horses went swishing through it at a steady half-walk, half-amble. Nimble they were and sure-footed after their breed, and only twice did one trip over a tussock and pitch its rider with a crash and a crackle of Gaelic malediction. I rode close behind Tadg, with Father Senan behind me; and Donal, away down the strung-out line, shepherded the rear.

In the break of dawn a black pine ridge showed away in front, and in another quarter-hour we burst through a thick breast of sallies and came in amongst the trees. And there Tadg halted and we gathered round him.

"We are here now, O'Cahan," he said, pride in his voice. "This is Esker Raida, and beyond in the vale is the dun. There is no good in me any more till I put sleep over me."

"Nor in any of us," said Donal. "Rest it is."

We found a trickle of water amongst the sallies, and in there we tethered the horses. Ourselves went into the brink of the Esker among the pines, where the ground was dry and sandy, with a fine mat of brown needles. There we lay down wearily. Our ration of provisions had run out in the night, and I was very empty, but stronger than hunger was the desire to sleep, and sleep I did under my long cloak.

Some time in the morning I waked to hear a gallowglass growl furious curses. He had lain down too near a big ant-heap, and the ants had found him and got stingingly under his tunic. I mind starting to chuckle, and then I must have fallen asleep again, for I was dreaming of running water that would not quench my thirst, though I poured down mether after mether.

It was high day when Donal shook me awake out of a league-deep sleep. Tadg bent above his shoulder and pointed to the ridge above.

"Come and see," whispered Donal, and the two turned and started to climb.

All the men were sound asleep, the hoods of their cloaks hiding their faces. Father Senan was lying at my side, his cowl fallen back, and in the light of day his bearded, gentle face was gray and cold. Quietly I spread my cloak over him and rose to my feet. The hard sand had numbed a hip-bone, and I had to stamp my feet to get the life back.

The Esker was very steep at this point, and I had to help myself upwards

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by the spindly trunks of the pines. Halfway up I heard a scrambling behind, and there was the old priest dragging himself over the crotch of a root. I waited for him.

"Could you not be staying in your bed?" I chided him.

"Could I not!" he panted, agrin; "and big Scots feet stamping all round me to wake the dead. Give me a small grip of you, boy."

So we went on together. We found Donal and Tadg lying on the crown of the ridge, and we lay down by them and looked out on as pleasant a scene as eyes ever saw after hard days.

WE LOOKED over the tops of trees on a green and pleasant vale, park-land clumped with orderly plantations, with here and there the brighter green of growing corn. In the middle distance a stream flowed and wimpled, and my eyes followed its course westwards, and there, not two miles away, was the lifting plane of the Atlantic Sea.

Donal elbowed me, and I followed his pointing finger. "There it is, now." His voice was low and deep.

It was our goal, the stronghold of Dunkellin, a mile away eastwards. It stood on a knoll above the stream, a strong square tower with a high mantling wall, and below it, near the water, was the usual scattered hamlet and the Norman tower of a church.

"And you to take that place with ten men!" said Father Senan.

"Fourteen counting yourself, holy man. What do you carry sparth-ax for? If we got within yon port I would not ask for more."

Tadge had been examining the vale with searching eyes. Now he spoke.

"I know that lad," he said. "Ruari, the herd! See him?"

We looked closely where he pointed. Out in the vale, some distance to the left, was a thick young plantation, edged with undergrowth, and at the brink of this, shaded from the sun, stood a herdsman, leaping on a spear.

"Can ye make out his dog?" Tadg inquired anxiously. "He owns a white half-wolf bitch, Gnav, would kill a man. No sign of her I see."

We could see no sign of her either, but Tadg lay peering for many minutes to make sure that she was not hunting in the plantation. "Pups she will be having," he said at last. "Luck with us! Ruari is honest enough for a herd, and might be trusted, but I will not be trusting him a great deal all the same. Wait ye here, now, and keep an eye open. Veal for dinner is in this." He crawled along the ridge to the left and was lost to sight amongst the trees.

We waited and watched with interest. After what seemed a long time a magpie rose from the plantation behind the herd and flicked away with its protesting chg-chg-chg.

"One for sorrow," whispered Donal.

"And two for joy," said I, as a second magpie flushed.

The herd took no notice, but he would know that magpies were always on their short flights and always protesting about nothing. Still we waited, our eyes on the herd. We expected him at any moment to turn and look into the growth behind. But instead, and very suddenly, he stumbled, fell flat on his face, and, slid backwards into the underbrush.

"By the red MacSwayne!" swore Donal, chuckling. "Surely, Tadg, you are not putting much trust in him. Watch ye, now!"

After another wait the herd came weaponless from the grove and circled round a solitary calf, feeding some distance out. Deftly he edged it towards the plantation until, finding itself too close to the trees, it turned to face him, and at that proper moment Tadg burst from the undergrowth, clasped its body and legs in his great arms, and was back into hiding, quick as fox or weasel.

"My choice thou, Tadg a son!" cried Donal delightedly.

In another quarter-hour Tadg and the herd were with us below the crown of the ridge. The herd came first, a mat-haired kern, barefooted, stumbling under the weight of the dead calf across his shoulders. Tadg came behind, helping himself along with the lad's spear.

"Put it down there, Ruari boy, and rest yourself," Tadg said, and turned

to Donal. "He has news—good or bad I am not sure. You can trust Ruari, but we can cut his windpipe if we like. He has heard of you."

"YOUR news, my young lad?" Donal came at once to the point, steel in his voice, and the kern sensed the prick.

"There is no one in the dun, my lord O'Cahan," he began hurriedly. "The servants and a handful of pikes only.... The Lord and Lady Amy are in Galway since ere yesterday to a feasting of the governor's—"

"Hell to Bingham and his feasting!" cursed Donal feelingly. "I feared as much when the Athenree people went by us last evening.—When do they return, boy?"

"Tonight, prince."

"Is knowledge at you?"

"It is surely." He pointed to the dead calf. "That one's mother, a young heifer calved too soon and spoiled for the milking, was beefed this morning to make a late supper for the lord."

"What?" cried Donal. "Does Rickard the Sassenach devour a whole beef for supper?"

"Maybe his fair daughter eats a bit once in a while," said Father Senan.

"A big tail of soldiers is with him as well," said the herd.

"Go on, Ruari," urged Tadg.

"Look, chief O'Cahan! Lord Rickard is full of suspicions—and well he might. Near a fortnight ago he missed Tadg, and him watching him since yon at Galway town. He put the wood kerns to the searching, and they traced Tadg as far as Tuam and he making north. Enough that was. Threatened to hang him—ay, did he!" He rubbed his nose, that had a trace of blood from his fall. "From the top window of the dun at the end of a string—"

"Never mind me," growled Tadg.

"I would think small of hanging a lad myself, if put to it," hinted Donal bleakly.

That herd had a faculty of humor.

"I know it," he said. "Between you and Rickard the Sassenach a loose head is with me this day, but I will be waiting for the hanging that is farthest off." He was finding his tongue and courage. "Mind you, one-and-all, if it was not for the Lady Amy, the darling one, dumb as fish would I be, for a shut mouth—"

"The thing you never had, Ruari mouth-open," derided Tadg, and turned to Donal. "This is the fork of the stick we are in, O'Cahan: Rickard the Sassenach has a guard of twenty trained men on the road with him—his Sassenach bodachs in steel and buff—and all mounted."

Donal considered that.

"It is not the worst of news," he said at last. "It shows that in his mind was a march home in the night, and the lady with him.—Is that all your news, herd?"

"Every word—but Tadg will hang if ever—"

"Come, then," Donal stopped him. "Work is before us that calls for a full belly."

DURING the meal Donal was deep in thought, and in no pleasant thought either, to judge by his drawn-down brows. And, indeed, I too was thinking seriously. This lady of his, in the midst of twenty soldiers, was the kernel of a nut not easy to crack. And crack it we must—or try to. More to myself than to him I spoke aside. "Twenty troopers! Heavy metal for our light horses!"

"That is not worrying me at all," Donal said. "You saw me pick these lads here, and I picked them well."

"Look you," I suggested, "if the dun is weakly held we might walk in at the gloaming—and there is our ambush."

Donal nodded. "It could be done. It is in my mind. But once in we might not get out that easy. A servant slipping away on us, a soldier dropping over the wall—and Dunkellin would have two hundred men round us before dawn, and more coming."

"But an ambush out here—"

"I know. I do not like it. Fourteen of us—heavy men—driving down on them, all holds loose—and Amy, and it might be other ladies.... Think of that

fury of blows. God!" He shrugged his shoulders to throw off the vision. "Ah well! risk is in it any way you look, and the risk we must take. If you are done eating—and time for you—we will look over the ground."

Father Senan and Tadg Ironhand went with us. Tadg led seawards for half a mile to where the Esker took a curve north and again west. Here we were out of sight of the dun, and went down to the other edge of the trees, crossed over the bight, and came to the other angle of the ridge. And there was the Galway road.

Donal looked up at the Esker, he looked along the Galway road, he looked over the sweep of pasture, and made up his mind, his jaws grinding.

"Ambush it is," he said in his teeth, "and this is the spot. If Rickard the Sassenach looks for danger he will hardly look for it so near his own dun. Post our men up there in the fringe of the trees—that side of the point—and no one coming on the road can see them without turning to look. God be good to us!"

At that word ambush I felt my heart tighten. Here, at last, the buttons were off the blades and the test had come for me. Ah well . . . !

Father Senan, saying no word, had followed us about as we worked, and now he had a word to say, a glint in his eye. "My children, I see you are out for a shedding of blood, and I am a man of peace—"

"With a sparth-ax at his thigh and his tonsure under a casque!" said Donal derisively.

"A man of peace—an old friar who, belike, will be binding a marriage before morning. I strike no blow this night—unless I have to."

"You might strike a blow at Ruari the herd, and you watching him back at the camp—and you at your prayers the same time."

"Prayers I will be at surely, but not in camp; and I will tie Ruari to a tree, a twist in his mouth. See that fine thick clump of growth out beyond. In there I will be, head under wing like a black chicken."

"What is in your mind, holy man?" Donal inquired.

"That Rickard the Sassenach of Dunkellin is no fool. At the onfall he will know what the onfall is for, and his highest endeavor will be to get his prize away. Ye, both hands full, might be too busy to call halt, but if I could summon up enough courage I might sally out and reason with him in a Christian spirit."

"And rid me of an unwilling father-in-law. No—"

"Silence, son! Would you gainsay the Church?"

And at that we left it.

IT WAS dark there on the edge of the trees, and my nerves began to string themselves tightly. The waiting was beginning to tell on me. Eastwards, the moon had risen above the Esker, but our angle of the ridge was still in deep shadow, except where a thinning of the trees showed a silver gleam among the trunks.

I sat there in front of the line, and I envied the hardened fighters behind me. They were used to this, the work of surprise and sally and shouting death so terrible to the English train-bands—and to veterans too. And I had never been in the press of fight. Yet Donal had made me captain of the charge and put full responsibility on me, himself taking left of the line. As he said, he must remain free for one thing only—getting to his lady's side.

Time passed slowly. The shadow of the ridge lying on the grass narrowed and narrowed until now it was on the edge of the road. I do not know how near the breaking-point I got, but I found it difficult to sit still on Benmee's broad back, and I found something rising in my throat that if yielded to would be laughter. And then, somewhere in the woods far behind us, lifted the long howl of a wolf, the terrible hunting-howl shaking through the night that causes the neck hairs to lift. I drew in my breath with a catch, and a man behind me moaned. That drawn sound steadied me somehow. I took comfort.

Here was a man with nerves, too, and he a picked veteran.

"Easy, brother, easy!" I soothed him.

Tadg Ironhand was away round the curve on the Galway road watching for the first sign of the cavalcade. A gallowglass held his horse on the left of the line next Donal. We must be patient and wait his news. But he was a long time in coming, and now the road below us was full in the moon. In a short time we up here would be under its radiance too, and plain to be seen from the horn of the bight. Surely it must be that Dunkellin and his tail would not venture the road by night. The wise course! Rickard, by all accounts, was too seasoned a campaigner to risk a night ambush. Fools we were to think otherwise. I turned in my saddle to say as much to Donal, and stilled in that position.

There was no mistaking that sound. The clink of a shod hoof against stone!

SOMEONE was coming beyond a doubt, and in a short while it was certain that many came. There was the confused thud of many hooves and, now and then, the cadence of a voice lifted carelessly. I straightened in the saddle, flexed my knees, and slowly drew my Ferrara. It made no sound that time. There followed a slight rustle as each man got ready. We folded our cloaks over left arms and, bending forward, threw a corner over our horses' heads. I looked sideways along the ridge for Tadg. What could be keeping him? To me the tramp of hooves was just round the corner, though in truth it was still a good way off. I cursed him mutely, and as I cursed he flitted under Benmee's head and placed his great hand on my knees. That hand shook—or my knee shook.

"They come," he whispered tensely, and the whisper went down the line. "Not more than twenty English soldiers—all in a bulk. Two ahead—one a lady—Dunkellin and my darling."

He was gone, and I heard him whisper to Donal, and then his saddle-girths creaked as he mounted.

The tramp was now indeed near. I seemed to grip all my feelings between my teeth, and I could see myself hurtling down the slope in a reckless and deadly mood. I kept my eyes at the end of the road and steadied my grip on hilt. . . .

And there was a horse's head, and there another. . . . Two riders came abreast—a lady on the inside swaying easily to the walk-amble of her horse, and beyond her a tall man, black-bearded. They went by and did not glance our way. My eyes did not follow them. For the head of their escort was coming round the curve, two and two riding abreast, slouched wearily in their saddle—riding carelessly at least. Their steel corselets took the gleam of the moon. Here and there a voice murmured, and one man whistled softly. They were so near home, danger behind, supper in front. Poor fighting-men! But I had no pity in me then. Instead, something snapped with a red spark in my head and left me cool and deadly.

I brought blade down with a cut that sang—the agreed signal—struck Benmee with knee and heel, felt her jerk and spring, and there was I hurtling down at the head of the column. Thunder of hooves behind me, a startled clatter of hooves on the road, sudden shouts that rose into a shriek, and then Donal's voice like a clarion. "Amy! Amy! To me, Amy!" And then the slogan of the clan like a wolf's howl—"O'Cahawn! O'Cahawn!" No wonder men shrieked as we came out into the light of the moon.

Steel gleamed close to me. A horse reared aside in front. I gripped knees tight and struck it full, and horse and man fell sideways. I struck downwards and my shearing blade seemed to sing through empty air. I brought blade up in the swing, and there was a tall fellow in half-armor facing me, his long blade at the thrust. Close to the hilt I parried, and cut at the neck above the gorget. Deftly he warded the blade above his bent head. Here was a swordsman. And I had to kill him—or myself die. A horse bundled into me from behind and we were thrown close together. Quickly he shortened his blade and lunged furiously at my face, and I was

just in time to catch the lunge in folded cloak. His face was close to mine now and I could see the gleam in his eyes and on his teeth, and forthwith I struck him terribly below the casque with the heavy guard of Andrea Ferrara. He fell under Benmee's feet, and Benmee plunged over him. I whirled her round, blade on guard, and—it was all over.

It was quick as that—quicker than that. Our first onfall had broken Dunkellin's guard beyond all rallying, swept them clean off the road, and the terrible sparth-ax had done its work. Dead men on the road, wounded men a-crawl, men on foot running across the grass, scattered horsemen galloping furiously for the dun! It was all over.

BEFORE I had time to think of Donal I heard the rallying blare of the curved bronze horn that had come down the clan for twenty generations. I kicked Benmee and galloped.

I came on him on the road near the first plantation, sitting finely upright on his horse, broadsword in hand. And by his side sat his lady, tall and slim in her saddle. On the road before them stood a lean man with a black beard, who still gripped the hilt of a broken sword, and by his side stood Father Senan, leaning on the long haft of his sparth-ax.

I swung Benmee round and brought sword to salute. "All present, O'Cahan!"

Donal saluted back. "It is well. This is my lady."

Again I saluted, and the ax blades swished to salute behind me. There was a disciplined soldierly silence.

The black-bearded Rickard stood up straight and tall enough, but his head was restless on his shoulders. He lifted his right arm and looked at his broken sword, and then threw the useless weapon furiously on the ground.

Donal spoke a quiet order.

"Open ranks, there!" And then calmly to his enemy, "That is your road, Dunkellin."

"You had better kill me too," cried the other, a savage threat in his voice.

"Killing is done—this once," said Donal. "You are free to go."

Rickard the Sassenach threw a furious gesture towards the lady.

"Come, daughter!" he ordered fiercely.

For answer she put her hand on Donal's arm, and though her voice trembled it was clear and strong. "This is my place now, father."

Still a moment he hesitated, struggling between ire and dignity. Then he swung round suddenly, sent Father Senan staggering, and strode away between the open ranks. There was that in his stride that told us he would start running as soon as he was out of sight. I heard the lady's voice lifted tremulously. "Let us go from here, Donal. He will loose all Connacht against us."

Donal laughed confidently and comfortingly. "Let him, Queen! We know the safe road, and in a week you will rule us in Dungiven. Twos-about, David, and let us go."

(To be continued)

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BIG JIM'S WAY

A Novelette

By GORDON Mac CREAGH

A GREAT scientist has written that the perfect individual inherits fifty per cent of his characteristics from his mother and fifty from his father and that environment during adolescence determines character.

Which, when Jaime Williams' mother timidly reminded his father, Old Jim impatiently and emphatically stated that them highbrow sharps could call it whatever they durn pleased, but his boy was going to grow up to be called Jim, like himself.

So it was young Jim who crouched now beside a dim trail where great round jaguar pugs indented the moist earth. Going in both directions the pugs showed, and of varying clarity; from which any simpleton would know that they indicated a trail frequented by the great beast. Though how he had found the trail was not so simple. Watching the *zopilotes* circling low over scrub that late afternoon, he knew that there was a kill, and because they didn't drop down to the feast, he knew that the killer

would be lying up close by, waiting for the heat of the day to pass before dining; and the only beast that would do that would be a *tigre;* and young Jim could sell a *tigre* skin for perhaps as much as a hundred *bolivianos*—if he could take it all the way over the mountain passes, a two weeks' journey after the snow had melted, to La Paz city. And knowing that much, any simpleton again would know that a *tigre,* having eaten, would come lazily along its regular trail to its drinking pool in the shallow dry-weather river. By its tracks Jim judged it to be a big young male.

Perhaps, too, only a simpleton would be waiting for it in the dusk with no weapon better than a machete.

Young Jim was not simple; he was just tied down by the grim circumstance that guns cost money and that his machete was about the only inheritance of his father's that he had left. That, and some of the fifty per cent characteristic that enabled him to use it with the swift skill of a swordsman.

It was a good machete, probably the best in all the Yungas province of Bolivia on the Eastern slope of the Cordillera, where men had to have good machetes and know how to use them. Old Man Jim had made it himself—out of an American cavalry saber blade, he said—and he had built the guard into the handle too.

"Using a machete, son," he had instructed young Jim, "you don't hold it hangin' down, the way these Spics does. That's old Navy cutlass style—went out fifty year back. You hold it point slopin' up and knuckles up, so you can parry a big arching swing an' drive short an' sudden for the other mug's throat. The guard'll take o' your knuckles under his blade."

Young Jim had never used the machete that way and he shuddered away from the thought as he waited for his *tigre.* He didn't know how his father had come to know so much about how to hold a saber; he knew, as a matter of fact, very little about fierce Old Man Jim. He remembered only a terrific journey over the high cordillera passes with a frightened Spanish mother and an uncle Stephen, down to this wretched Huachi place at the head of the great rapids where his father had stayed only because he could journey no farther with a woman, but his Uncle Stephen had preferred to accept the hazards of going on.

That had been a long time ago, and fierce Old Jim had built Huachi up to be an outpost shack town and himself the king of it. So that there should have been more of an inheritance than just a machete. But then there had come that affair with Ortego Peña and Luis the Mestizo, and the cavalry method of holding a machete had not proved to be good enough against two such experts in their own method both together.

Blood! Spurting quarts of it! No weapon is quite so hideously gory as a machete. Young Jim had seen all of it—he remembered he had gone away and retched his bowels out. Ruiz, he remembered, had gone down horribly gurgling; and then Ortego had suddenly taken a hand and hacked at Old Jim from behind. Even the hard citizens of Huachi had felt that to be a little beyond the code; and Ortego Peña had hurried to go on down river to the Chaco plains beyond, where people went who wanted to lose themselves.

A LONG time ago. Ten years at least; young Jim didn't remember. There was nothing good to remember about those years. The frightened Spanish mother had hugged him all the closer to herself and had fondly molded him to be her Jaime, preaching, the while, the constant hope of escape from this barbarous place of brute men. But she had not lasted to see any fulfilment of her hope.

Many years ago. Nothing good about any of them. Environment molding Young Jim's inheritances to character. He was his father's Jim just now, not his mother's Jaime, crouching beside the trail waiting for a jaguar in the dusk. Not Jaime. Jim, the way the old man had taught him. He had time to wonder all over again about his father. He didn't care why he had come here with a wife and a brother who wouldn't stay, but he did wish he knew what the old man had been. Army? Indian fighter? Scout? Whatever it was, he had certainly known

his woodscraft, and he had translated it all to these jungles of the Bolivian Eastern slope. Young Jim was not afraid of any jaguar in the dusk.

He heard the imperceptible soft pad of its feet in its path. He would have heard nothing at all if the beast had been slinking to its feeding; but, well fed now and lazy, it was heavy-footed on its way to drink. Jim had circled the trail far below and come up on the leeward edge of it, so that the jaguar was abreast of him before the fine sensitivity of its whisker tips detected the close warmth of his body.

Jim knew just what it would do. It would rasp its terrifying snarl and rear back with both taloned front paws spread to their full eight-inch stretch ready for their disembowelling swing. He was waiting for it, poised on low half-knee and toe like a sprinter waiting for the gun.

Not afraid. He didn't know that this intangible something of the woods and its ways was something else that he had inherited from Old Jim's environment, besides a machete.

The *tigre* did just as Old Jim had taught him it would. It reared back, and struck like light. Young Jim parried first, knuckles up, against the stroke that he knew would come before he could lunge. It came. The arcing paw nearly cut itself off on the blade edge. Then Jim was in on his lunge and with the same movement out again. The instant his right foot touched ground and his machete point touched throat his left foot leaped up and outward. The wrenching heave of the blade almost decapitated the brute. Still the flash of its right paw, following instantly on its right, ripped the shirt from his shoulder.

Young Jim screamed high like a Harpy eagle over its kill. But he was sorry for his shoulder. Not for the ripped flesh. That was just one of the accidents of the woods. Skin has a happy faculty of mending itself; and it would, since he was healthy and as wiry as a *tigre* himself. But a shirt, miserable inanimate thing, couldn't grow a new piece to itself; and that was the only shirt young Jim owned.

Young Jim whistled as he skinned the *tigre* with expert fingers in the quick falling dark. He whistled still as he picked a silent way through the jungle. But, coming down to the river flats of Huachi village, the whistle sort of petered out on his lips. Huachi village, with the people who lived in it, was not conducive to whistling—not to any man who would be called "Jaime," as his fond mother had taught everybody to do, instead of the ill-sounding and coarse "Jeem", or worse, "Jeemee."

Still, a good *tigre* skin, not salt-stiffened nor fat-burned as these local dumb settlers did—a skin prepared as Old Jim knew how to do in the field, with plenty of elbow grease and yolk of egg—would bring a hundred *bolivianos* in the far market of La Paz, if he could manage to hold onto it till the snow left the passes. And with a hundred *bolivianos* a man could buy a gun; and with a gun, perhaps—

But that was a futile counting of chickens, and Jim—that is to say, Jaime—knew it well enough to let the whistle die on his lips.

NO sooner was he in the village street, than a man lolling in his hammock under the thatched shadow of his veranda called: "*Hola, Jaime, qué tal?* What you got there?" Of course he called him Jaime, never Jeem.

And Jaime miserably had to tell the truth. "A *tigre* skin."

"What? Another? It is the green devil's luck that you have. Let me see."

It was an order, not a request. Other men swung from their hammocks, slipped their feet into *alpargatas* to protect their soles from hook worm and padded across the dust of the street.

"Oho! A fine big skin, Jaimcito." said the first man. It was damnable that they so often added the diminutive to the name, though Jaime was as big as any of them, "A very good skin. I buy it from you for ten *bolivianos*."

"Ten! But, Ramon, my dear sir, this skin in La Paz is—"

Ramon laughed. "La Paz is a long way off and the mountains are yet to be passed. At ten *bolivianos* there will already be too little profit."

"But, Ramon," Jaime interjected his usual plea. "I don't want to sell this—"

"Fifteen *bolivianos*," another man said.

Ramon half swung out of his hammock. "Is it, *amigo* Virgilio, that you dispute my right to buy this skin for ten? I saw him first, did I not?"

And just that trifling dispute explained nearly everything about Jaime. *Who saw him first!* That explained why they called him Jaime, as his fond, frightened mother had done incessantly without hindrance after Big Jim's blood had spouted in the village street; why Big Jim's inheritance had dwindled down to just a machete.

That was his fifty per cent inheritance from his mother's side and the environment she had tied him up into during those long ago years when he was still a boy. That half of his inheritance explained why there was no good thing to remember about those years.

Young Jim—Jaime—had just one friend in Huachi Village. Gaspar el Cojo, the Lame One. Gaspar could not fight for his rights either. Gaspar hobbled to Jeem's wattle and adobe shack to offer sympathy.

"It has happened again?"

Jeem lay for a long time with his face buried on his tense corded arms. Till he rolled over and said through tight teeth:

"But for the last time."

Gaspar hopped with excitement. "*Santos Animales!* You mean—you will grip yourself and will not permit these bullies to tread on you as a toad? *Canastos,* that would be a fight! You must pick Ramon, my dear fellow. He is the boldest. When you have blooded him a little the rest will remember the son of your father."

Jim just sat on the edge of the cane laced bench that made his bunk and stared dully at his friend.

Gaspar was all enthused. "Who knows better than I, *amigo hombre,* that you could do it—at all events, quite likely, though that Ramon is a devil. But Ramon was afraid of your father. I was already old enough at the time to remember him. *Un hombrezon!* What a man! A wolf of a man. You have grown to have the same face, *amigo* Jeem, and the same lean hard limbs of a jungle runner as he was. If you would but grip yourself and do the half of what your father's face promises, these misborn dogs, *espurios,* would tuck their tails low. When do you propose, my friend, to do this thing?"

Jim shook his head dully. "I wish, Gaspar, that I was going to do it. I have even made prayers that I might. But—you were not there that day, Gaspar. You didn't see the blood spout from the throat." Jim's eyes closed tight against that picture.

Gaspar clucked with his tongue regretfully. "No, I was not there. My lameness prevented me from getting to the fight in time. But I tell you, Jeem." His black eyes glittered with excitement again. "You can establish yourself. You can win back—"

Jim shook his head. "I can not. I am therefore going away."

"Goin away? *Pero hombre!* Where to? At this season? How? The passes to the west are fifty feet deep in snow. It is sure death—"

Jim's lean jaw that looked like his father's clamped tight.

"It has been for the last time," he repeated. "Two things I have left in the world—my machete and my shame. Nothing else. Nothing to keep me in this place. I shall therefore go east, to the wide open Chaco, where people go who want to lose themselves, where nobody knows me. It has been for the last time. I shall go now. Tomorrow with the daylight." He laughed harshly. "My packing, at least, will be easy."

Gaspar was appalled. "But you are mad! How can you go? The river at this season is too low; even a balsa raft would splinter on the first rapids, and there are three hundred miles of them!"

Jim was able to grin thinly, like a wolf. "I shall go less than half that distance. Direct. Through the jungle. Now."

GASPAR gaped at him. "But that is impossible, this belt of rain-forest jungle in the foot hills. Impassable. Lianas, thorns, and the cane belts that are a wall. People who have gone down the river gorges have seen them. Nobody

has ever hewn a way even ten miles into this jungle."

"Then I shall be the first. There is nothing in the jungle that could be worse than this place. I, who know the jungle, tell you."

"Yes. You, better than anybody, know the jungle. But—" Gaspar made a last plea. "A man, my friend, who would dare the jungle could take his heart in his hands and show these bullies what kind of a man he is."

Jim only shook his head and spoke a simple truth that the great scientist would have expressed in terms of psychology. Jim did not even know that the scientist existed, nor even that a science of explaining men's souls existed. He spoke only out of his experience. "The difference, Gaspar, my friend, is that I am not afraid of the jungle; the wild beasts in it are afraid of me. While here—"

"But—" Gaspar clutched at the analogy. "These men are wild beasts. Why not—"

Jim shrugged his shoulders wearily. "It is a thing that I cannot explain, Gaspar. You did not see the blood spurt from your father's neck when you were twelve years old. Therefore, my friend, I go to the jungle. There is no other way for me."

Gaspar could repeat only: "But you are mad. Nobody can fight the jungle."

And that, likely enough, was true.

True, too, that there was no other way. Only the river. But the river must wait six months till the snows up the high passes would melt and bring water deep enough so that a balsa raft could survive the rapids. When the high water came, men could lash balsa logs together and disappear in a smother of foam. Disappear literally, for nobody ever came back. There was no way back. That is to say, there was a human possibility of reaching the Yungas foot hills again—you could keep traveling eastward across the vast plains country, by other jungle rivers, to the Amazon, to Para, by steamer all the way back through Panama, down the West coast and up over the high Cordillera again—half around the world to come back to a place separated from the plains by three hundred miles of roaring river—or by a hundred and fifty miles of silent jungle.

Come back for what? Nobody ever came back. People who dared the river didn't want to come back; they went into the Chaco plains like into a new continent and they remained lost.

Sometimes news filtered back, all the way around the South American coast. One piece of news was that Jim's Uncle Stephen had survived and that he was engaged in some sort of cattle business in a place called Concepcion in the plains. Maps showed Concepcion to be a tiny dot beside the river just where the shading of the mountains left off—only a few hundred miles, but separated by a barrier that was like time itself.

"I will win through the jungle to Concepcion," Jim said through tight teeth. "Nobody will know my affairs. I will find work with my uncle; and there, if men don't know that I am called Jaime, perhaps—" His voice died away. The hope in that perhaps was slim, but at least it was a hope.

So with tomorrow's daylight Young Jim packed up his luggage and set out, lonely as a wolf, an outcast, and looking like one.

The men of Huachi laughed.

"He is mad," they all agreed, these men who had never hewed their way ten miles into the jungle. "He will see the wall of the jungle and he will come back by tomorrow. Or if he does not, he will die. It is a pity, for he was a good hunter of meat and a fine provider of skins, and his price, ha-ha, it was always so reasonable. *Con Dios,* Jaime." They wished him that much luck.

JIM didn't look back. He had seen the last of Huachi. His luggage was on his back and he was going to lose himself in a new country. The luggage wouldn't hamper his travel through the jungle. It consisted only of a string hammock and rolled into its middle a tiny bag of salt and a stone for sharpening his machete. That was all that a man needed who knew the jungle—if he really *knew* it.

Jim knew that any simpleton could find food in the jungle, even if those men in the village didn't know. He knew, for

example, that meat could be had by lying up on some beast's trail, and that in swampy places lilies grew with bulbous roots called *ualusa* that tasted like potatoes; he knew a dozen different yam vines too, and out of them at least two that were not deadly poisonous. What more did any man need in the jungle? All you had to do was know how to get them.

The first day was easy. Outer jungle, comparatively open. Dark trails ran between walls of greenery, narrow, but enough for a man to pass. Jim had hewn most of them himself with his machete. Easy enough going, though slow. A man had to be as watchful as a cat. The beasts of the jungle were really afraid of a man, but they would jump him if they found him unwary.

Particularly careful a man had to be against the snakes: the fer-de-lance that hung in the bushes and lashed out at a man's face, or the jararaca that struck at a foot as it came down through the underbrush. You could put a tourniquet round a foot and bleed it, but you couldn't put a tourniquet round your face. Cat-careful a man had to be, and that made slow going.

Six whole miles Jim made that day. And then the high-pitched cough of the toucans told him that it must be getting dark up there above the tree tops too. Time to be looking for a tree that might afford a roost. It was all right not to be afraid of the jungle, but a man had to be awake and alert if he hoped to continue to live in it. A *tigre* or a *leon*, a panther, would jump a sleeping man in a minute. That was the real danger of going into the jungle alone. A man had to sleep, and alone; there was no partner to sit up and keep watch. So it would have to be a tree.

Jim cut a tough liana vine and tied a loose loop of it around his own body and the selected tree. Then with his machete he cut notches in the trunk for his feet and hitched himself up in a series of jerks, cutting steps as he went.

Forty feet of that sort of climbing was a gymnastic feat that taxed any man's muscles; all on the arms and back. It was just before he reached the first crotch that something shuffled and rustled stealthily in the dense greenery above his head.

The labored pounding of Jim's heart suddenly hammered in his ears. That sort of noise might be anything. And anything in the jungle might be dangerous.

Yet to go down that climb was just as much of a strain as to go up. More so, because one had to hang on while one felt with one's toes for the machete notches. Forty feet of precarious hitch and scuttle down. Jim felt that, without a rest first, his aching arms could not make it. He was between the devil and a deep drop. The longer he hesitated the more unbearable became the strain on his muscles.

"The jungle is inexorable," Gaspar had told him. "No respite. No choice, as in civilization, of fight or retreat."

During the few seconds that he still clung to the smooth bole and searched the leaf tangle above him for anything that moved, Jim knew that his chance to retreat was gone. It was beyond human endurance to hang on for forty feet of it. Jim was not even aware that he bit his teeth together and savagely plied his machete on the last two notches that would bring him to the crotch in the tree — fearsomely closer to whatever thing it was that rustled in its hidden branches.

WITH the last of his strength he threw his leg over the thick branch, half rolled onto it, and lay there panting. The branch was as thick as a sizeable tree trunk, itself, and for a distance of ten feet, as barren. But in the broad wet greenery above him and behind, Jim could hear the thing cautiously moving again. He lay prone and drew heaving breaths. He remained helplessly trussed for anything to jump upon his defenceless back until he could execute the precarious maneuver of cutting the liana loop that lashed his body to the main trunk and of turning around and straddling his branch in the opposite direction.

After an agonized period of recuperation, the change was accomplished. Jim crossed his heels beneath the branch, gripped tightly and listened for the shuf-

The jungle had done its worst.

fling noise again, trying to pierce the green screen in front of him.

Not exactly afraid. The normal human fear of the blank unknown prickled up and down his skin, but the reaction of his muscles remained alert.

And then suddenly, with soul searing silence, it was there. Not three feet from his face; suspended awesomely in the middle of a quivering leaf cluster. A long, flat scaly head, as big as his stretched hand. Iridescent purple-green above, shading to leprous yellow below. From horny nostril plates, like pointers, two golden-buff stripes led back to hard, cold eyes in which diagonal slits of irises glittered.

There the thing hung, motionless. Then from a thin aperture under the nostrils a slate gray forked tongue flicked out and back in a lightning swift preliminary "taste" of the odors in the air.

Hideously close. Suspended upon a graceful loop of sinuous neck that could lunge out faster than the movement of any other living creature—and three feet from it a puny human straddled on a barren branch forty feet above the ground!

Jim's reaction was no process of conscious volition. His woods training had developed patterns in his brain that responded to stimuli and actuated his muscles without direct thought.

His hoarse shout choked in his throat as his arm whirled the heavy machete blade up in a long reaching swing. He shouted again, full throated, as he thought he saw the blade tip connect with the scaly head and heard the click of steel against bone.

All in one lightning fast flash, it was. A gleam in the air, a thin snick; and, as swiftly as the gleam, the head and neck snatched themselves out of sight.

The echo of Jim's shout floated amongst the tree tops. Silence followed. The dead silence and stillness of the momentarily startled jungle.

Far away somewhere a red howler monkey roared his defiance. And with that there commenced a monstrous heaving and writhing in the leaf mass. Nothing could be seen through the thick screen. But Jim knew that damage had been done. He was sure now he had seen the blade flick home.

He waited tense, gripping his branch till his knees ached. Till presently, slowly, like a heavy wet rope, reluctantly, thick coils slipped down from the green tangle. The flat head hung by a shred of torn white flesh. Limply the coils hung lower and lower, monstrously twisting. They straightened out; the last hold slipped; with a rush the long glistening body shot down and disappeared through the tops of the underbrush.

Jim heard the progressively glutinous thud of the coils on the moist ground. He breathed heavily. Eyes flashed alertly around the little that he could see up there. He turned his head above to catch sounds from any other direction. His own voice surprised him.

"Twenty feet of it, by gum! Could take a man in like a raw egg." He found his limbs trembling with reaction. Warily he shifted his position, further up the tree where more branches could offer a better hold. He talked to reassure himself. "And by the same token it's a safe bet there's no other live thing in this same tree."

Muttering, he found convenient branches, unlashed his hammock from his back and swung himself a nest as aloof as the roosting birds.

ANOTHER day came. Jim hitched himself down from his perch into the tangle of thick undergrowth where the writhing coils had disappeared in last night's gloom.

A creeping of his back hair assailed him as the upper leaves swished about his feet. What if the thing were not altogether dead! He knew the astounding vitality of reptiles.

For a moment, as he saw no glistening carcass, the chill crept over him again. But looking warily closer, he saw the ground pitted with innumerable little cleft-hoof impressions. His breath hissed between close teeth; he was growing into the habit of talking to himself.

"Peccaries, by golly! Seen 'em eat a *leon* that way. Hate to go scrambling around the dark, hunting a good tree, and those little devils gnashing around my heels."

He looked around, not only in caution, but to orient himself. He rolled his hammock about his shoulders and drew his machete to hew a trail. His mutter was savage. "I'd go back today, they said, huh? Bet none of them would ha' got this far." There was a certain grim satisfaction in that.

Not such easy going this day. He had been pushing through fringe jungle; now he was coming to the inner jungle, the "wall" that men spoke of. Vine tangles; tough trailers of hooked thorns. Devil-devised thorns that tore triangular rents in the toughest khaki shirt. Innocent, elephant-ear-like leaves, armed along their edges with tiny hairs that got into the thorn scratches and burned like acid —and sprang into excoriating activity for days thereafter each time that water wetted the wound.

Wolf-eyed, Jim hewed his way into the tangled dimness. He wasn't afraid of the jungle, but the jungle, in revenge, took his clothes from him shred by shred.

Jim beat it perhaps four miles that day, perhaps three the next. He didn't know. Jungle travel isn't reckoned in miles; it is reckoned in days spent and in stamina remaining.

Jim was tough—physically, at all events. He still had stamina enough to keep going on instead of back. He would rather die in the jungle than go back and let those tough men of Huachi laugh like howler monkeys and say they told each other so. A man could fight back at the jungle.

Two days, three days, four—it didn't matter. Jim lost count. After days of wading through wet greenery, dim-lit by an under-sea light that filtered through the high branches, the sky opened up ahead. A yellowness showed that the sun still shone. Jim pressed forward with grateful anticipation. He must at last be through. He came to the end of the forest belt—and then he saw what it was that permitted nothing else to grow.

Cane! The *caña estacada* of the foothills. *Estacada*, stockaded, as thick as a man's wrist, waving cat tail plumes twenty feet high. Massed so thick that not even parasite vines could find nourishment. Just cane, nothing else. A belt of it, and no means of knowing how deep or how long—perhaps a mile, perhaps fifty, and every single leaf of its millions a fine saw-edged sword.

Cane was the end. No man, however strong, could hew his way through the cane. To go into the cane was like swimming out into deep water; a man lasted just as long as his stamina did. Men who came to cane and had to get beyond worked their way along the edge of it until the belt came its own end—or the men came to theirs. And that was a question of stamina again—sheer staying power against the jungle. Jim squatted and honed at the blade of his machete with his stone while he brooded that question.

Stamina. He knew that he was making less distance every day. He did not

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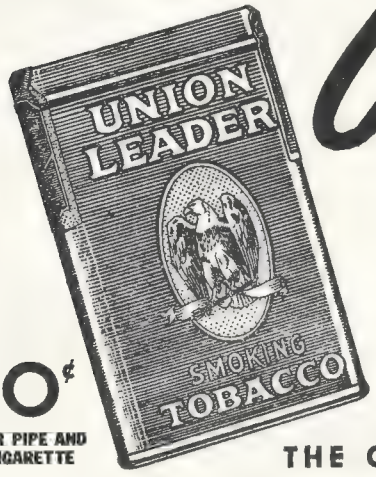

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THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKE

know how much more distance there must be made. Nobody knew; nobody had ever done it. He knew that he had stamina enough to last him back to Huachi. He stared at the cane, brooding the question with bloodshot eyes.

Not a man of them in Huachi but would have gone back now—if he might ever have come this far. Jim grunted his conviction of that. He knew with a grim gleam of satisfaction that not a one would have come this far. And he knew one other thing about the cane that he thought perhaps not a one of them knew.

Tapir trails. A tapir is the one creature with hide sufficiently thick to traverse the cane. Tapirs stand between three and four feet high and hide up in the cane during the heat of the day, where they eat the young shoots. They leave long burrows that wander for aimless miles through the dim stockade and terminate in inexplicable dead ends in the middle of nowhere.

A man could follow a tapir trail, Jim knew, till his back broke from bending to a height of between three and four feet—or until he came to dead end. If his stamina and tenacity should be holding out he could crawl on his hands and knees all the way back to where his ill judgment led him into the wrong turning.

Other animals can take advantage of tapir trails too; *tigres* and *lobos*, wolves. With wolfish eyes Jim ducked into a tapir trail.

In tapir trails there lurk *garapatos*, enormous striped ticks furnished with the necessary equipment to fasten onto thick-skinned animals and suck blood until they distend to the size of transparent gooseberries. But *garapatos* didn't frighten Jim. There were worse things—mosquitos!

JIM never knew how wide was that cane belt, nor how many days he was in it, nor how far he traveled, in and around and about. He knew only that the jungle was bringing its most insidious weapon to bear against his stamina—the fever that the mosquitos carried!

He blundered with puffed eyes through aimless passages. He came to abrupt ends. He staggered miles back. He turned into other tunnels that wound hither and yon and around, back to a trail where he saw his own shreds of clothing hanging to sharp leaf spikes. He knew nothing of where or how or which direction.

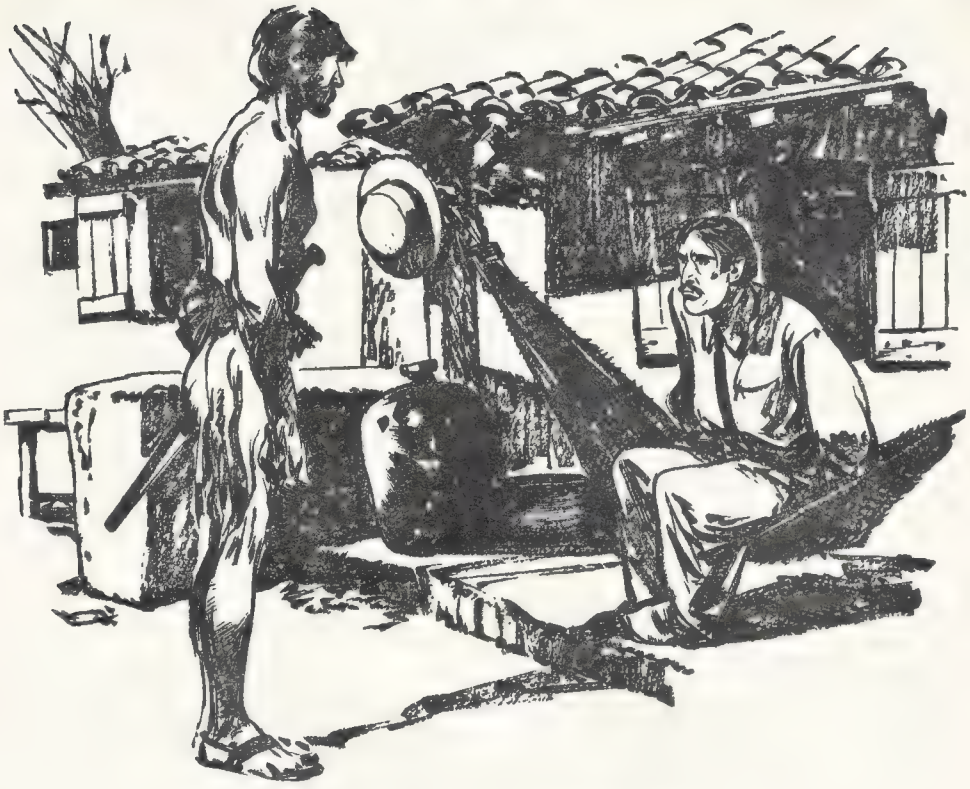
Only one thing he still knew about the cane. The tapir trails, if you could happen on the right one, eventually led to the river at some place where the cliffs of the gorges were low enough for a tapir to get to its daily bath. He must find a trail to the river. Somewhere close along the river would be cinchona trees; he must find a cinchona tree and strip its bark and brew a tea for his fever. He must, or that would be the end of the trail. He knew that out of wild banana leaves he could fold a cunning cup that would heat water over a fire; he knew, of course, how to make a fire with a flint stone against the back of his machete; he knew—oh, he knew everything about how to keep alive in the jungle—if he could but get to the necessary things in time.

Jim supposed later that he must have gotten to the things in time. He retained only vague memories of crawling on calloused hands and raw knees through dim trails in the direction where his hot skin told him there must be water. He supposed he must have found a cinchona tree, because there were strips of bark still lying on the little sandy beach where he came to life again; and there was the mark of a fire; and, right alongside of him, the great splay three-toed prints of tapir hooves. The big dumb brutes must have almost trampled on him as they came to drink.

"*Grac' Dios!*" he mumbled. They might have been other tracks, the four toes and heel of one of the big cats. But, if they had been, he would have never have known about it.

He sat up weakly, grateful for the sun in this open spot; grateful for more things than he could remember just now. "*Grac' Dios!*" Many of his exclamations were unconsciously Spanish. "Thank Pete!" he put it into English. Certainly he was grateful!

And hungry! Grateful for that, too; that was a good sign. He was too shaky



He saw Jim's face and remained silent.

to go hunting as yet; but here, in the comparatively smooth water between the gorges, he could scramble along a little way, and at any little backwater there was likely to be a big catfish sunning itself in the shallow, an easy mark for a thrown machete.

Jim was able to grin to himself. If he had licked the jungle so far, he could lick it to the end; the jungle had done its worst. It had done much worse than he had ever known before; there couldn't be any new tricks up its sleeve. Stamina was all he needed. As for guts? That was what he was grinning about. He hadn't known when he started out, but guts enough to get this far he had shown. He had lasted this many days; he would last it through. Some rest and cinchona tea and catfish. His strength would come back.

Days didn't matter. He had long ago given up any attempt to keep track of days. All he needed to keep track of was direction, and that was easy, because always to his left there must be the river. When its long curves took it away from him he didn't worry; he could keep direction in the dimmest jungle by the slope of the hills. They sloped to the east; they must come out eventually on the great plains country.

Till at last there came a day when the jungle brightened ahead of him from dim green to yellow, and this time it wasn't another belt of cane. Abruptly, like the wall that it was, the jungle came to an end and before him stretched the endless miles of the grass plains. The new country.

Jim stepped out into it and sniffed the sun-heated air. Alive! Whole! As tough as a jungle animal! And as naked!

That was the worst that the jungle had done to him. It had taken his clothes from him shred by shred and had given him instead an integument brown as an Indian from the myriad stings of

the tiny *piume* gnats, crisscrossed with a crazy pattern of white cicatrices from thorns.

Jim stretched his wide hard shoulders and shoved his machete back into its wooden sheath. He inhaled a huge breath of this warm new air, tasted it and let it go lingeringly. A man, in this good new country, could get lost from his past—perhaps.

Jim strode out into the open plain. To his left, not so far, was the wavy line of the river, turbulent still from its roaring journey through the gorges. Somewhere along the river, so the maps said, should be the town of Concepcion, where nobody knew the past of a man whom people had called Jaime. In the town there should be news, perhaps, of his Uncle Stephen. Uncle Steve would perhaps give him a job, the equal of other men.

And if not—Jim shrugged. Well, a man who had lived through the jungle could contrive to live in the open plains.

THE town of Concepcion was not much of a town. Hand hewn timbers and adobe made its straggly buildings. Just the last outpost on the eastern side of the jungle barrier: a cattle town that might have come out of the old American West, except that the men who lounged through the noon siesta hour lolled in hammocks.

Men again. Not jungle, nor wild animals of the jungle that were afraid of men. Jim compressed his features to a rigid tenseness that he hoped would not betray his nervousness. He didn't know that the effort made his face look like a lean wolf.

The man who lolled in the nearest hammock at the first end of the street half hoisted himself out of it in indignation to order off this naked Indian who approached so insolently; but then he saw Jim's face and remained silent.

"This, I take it," Jim said, "is the town of Concepcion?"

"It is so, *señor*. I thought at first you must be a Chimu Indio; but—"

"Is there, perhaps, here one Estéban Guillermo? That was the nearest Spanish to Steven William-

"*Bien seguro, señor*. The Rancho Estéban; the big house up there."

Jim stalked stiff-legged up the street, naked as a wolf and hoping that he showed no sign of how his skin felt. At the ranchhouse a *mozo* stared at him and ran to rouse the master. Uncle Steve came to the door, slopping in slippers and pajamas. Jim thought he could remember his face from the past years.

"I'm Jim Williams—" he began. But Uncle Steve jumped at him with wide welcoming arms.

"You don't have to tell me who you are, my boy. You've grown to be the dead spit of your dad; I'd know your face in the dark. But—God! You've had a rough passage, boy, as well I know how bad it can be! Come in, son. I'll get you some clothes. You'll want a bath and—" He clapped his hands and shouted to servants to hurry with hot water in kettles and fill up the earthen tub. He shook hands with Jim all over again, pumped both arms in delight.

"This is an answer to prayer, my boy. I'd hardly hoped—I'm getting on in years, you know, and my *vaqueros* need a strong hand in this country. My damned foreman, Oviedo Parkas, is getting so he thinks he owns the ranch. But now that you're here we'll— Come, sit down, boy, and tell me all about it. But wait. You'll be wanting to get cleaned, and we'll be eating in half an hour." Uncle Steve's excitement was as great as though Jim had arrived all unexpected from America. "I'll— By gorry, I'll get all the boys in and have 'em meet you and you'll tell us all about it together. I can hold myself that long. —*Mozo, aqui!* A clean suit from the locker, and where's that hot water? —Hurry along, my boy. You must— I'll show those vaqueros. This is a day of my good days!"

JIM came into the big *sala de comer* of the rancho, ill at ease and feeling stifled in his uncle's tight white coat and pants; he hadn't known that he was a bigger man in every way. The vaqueros were grouped together against one whitewashed wall, curious, self-consciously nonchalant.

Wiry, dark men they were, sun-baked, hard riders. They wore shirts as variegated as summer curtains and baggy trousers tucked into half-length boots. No guns were in evidence, but every man carried, tucked under his sash, a machete. Jim's heart was in his mouth at their aloof stares. He stiffened his face again to appear at ease. The men whispered sideways to one another. Jim didn't have to be a lip reader to make out the formation of words as simple as, "*Un hombre bravo*—a tough looking mug." There was some encouragement in that.

Uncle Steve made a speech of his introduction.

"*Señores vaqueros.* You have heard me speak of my brother—"

"Hell, who hasn't?" a man muttered.

"A *man*, I think I may have told you. *Un hombrezon!* A man who made the town of Huachi and ruled it like a wolf its whelps. This, *señores*, is his son, Jeem, my nephew." He said it as though there were something to be proud of. "Have seats, *señores*."

Chairs scraped on the rough planked floor, otherwise silence.

"Now, *señores*, my nephew will tell the news of the West and of his voyage down, which any of you who saw him arrive will understand must have been—" He stopped, open-mouthed. "But—Jim! You couldn't have! The river! It is impassable at this season! How? Why—"

Jim Williams was not a man for speeches. He didn't know what to say. So, quite simply, he boggled over the truth.

"I— Well, I didn't like it there. So I—I came on through the jungle."

"The jungle?" Half a dozen voices echoed the incredible statement. "Impossible!"—"It cannot be done!"—"No man has ever—" And then the voices had to prove it for themselves. "But yet—the river is impossible too."—"Nor has any balsa come down in months!"—"And we saw him walk in!"

Silence focussed on Jim. All eyes and hard appraisement. Incredible, perhaps, yet here the man was. Uncle Steve took up the indubitable acceptance of the fact, visibly swelling.

"Hear that, *señores*. He didn't like it where he was, this nephew of mine, so he just decided to come here through the jungle. His father's true son. Observe him, please, *señores*. He is to be my new foreman. Affairs will be different here from now on."

Another silence full of eyes fell on that. Jim felt the blood ebbing away from his face and settling cold in his stomach. Eyes looked at him, and then at one another. A voice whispered out of the silence, cutting the tenseness like a blade.

"*Car-r-rallos!* But Oviedo Parkas will make a fight about that."

"A fight?" Uncle Steve picked that up like a flung gauntlet. "Which one of you would care to make a fight with this nephew of mine, who has fought through the jungle? Look him carefully over, *señores*. Which one?"

Hot eyes looked, and looked away again. A hell-rakish looking youngster, bold enough to know that nobody would throw any imputations of cowardice at him, laughed. "*Sangre-Cristo!*" he admitted right out. "Not I. Not with a man who has a face like that one."

Good fellows, these. Cowmen, whether they wore guns or machetes, hard enough to know their own worth and honest enough to admit anybody else's.

It came to Jim that these men in this new country, who didn't know that he had ever been called Jaime, took him for the worth that he looked like and for what he had done. Jeem, the son of wolfish Old Jim. His blood surged up from his stomach to flood his face again. He pinched his lips tight to control his expression.

That was how the *tigres* in the jungle took him: fierce beasts, but instinctively clever enough to be just that necessary bit afraid of a man who could meet them on their own ground. And it was just that little bit that made all the difference. It was his inheritance, along with his machete, that he need never be afraid of a *tigre*. It surged into his brain like a flame that men, too, who didn't know about Jaime, could be just a little bit afraid of Jeem, who was not afraid of the jungle. Perhaps—surely, rather, a man could lose his past in this good new

country. Jeem's tightness of lips let go and he laughed.

ANOTHER voice broke into the room through the laughter. A thin snarl of a voice from the door.

"What is this talk that I have been listening to about a new foreman? A few minutes late I come and I hear that some stranger supplants me? Let me see this bold taker of a job that needs a man." He spoke as though it were within his own say-so who was to be foreman of the Rancho Estéban.

Tenseness shut down on the laughter like a slammed door. Silence, out of which a voice muttered:

"*Dientro!* It has come! There will be a trouble with that tom cat."

A louse, he had been called before, but tomcat described foreman Oviedo Parkas better. A battle-scarred tom that held down its preserves with ruthless tooth and claw applied whenever and however it could. *Tigre* would have fitted, perhaps, better; he was big enough. Only a *tigre* in the jungle has not learned as much of slyness as a backyard tom.

He stepped soft-footed into the room from the door, where he had been listening. "Let me look at this stranger from wherever he is. We must talk, perhaps, about who is fit to be a foreman."

Jim pushed his chair back and half turned. Oviedo Parkas saw his face and stopped as a cat stops dead on sight of its known enemy.

"This—" Uncle Steve was nervous in his introduction this time—"this is Jeem Guillermo. From Huachi."

Oviedo was backing away, as a cat backs. His lips were half snarling. His voice was a throaty mumble.

"That is a lie. Jeem Guillermo is dead."

Bodies shuffled back from the table. Breaths drew in thinly. Fighting words are fighting words in cow country anywhere.

Uncle Steve was old enough to pass words by. He said only: "Ah! So you knew him. You came from there, too, of course. This is not his ghost. This is Jeem, his son."

Oviedo was still backing away. His low mumble came again: "That is a lie. There was no son Jeem. There was only one, Jaime." The look in his eyes was feral, as though he was looking at a ghost.

Fear. The thing that made all the difference. Jim slowly pushed his chair further from the table and pushed himself up to his feet, crouching forward on bent knees as his father had taught him to do when he waited for *tigres* in the jungle.

"It is true," he said. "There was a Jaime. He died. In the jungle. I am Jeem, his ghost."

Nobody understood that. They only stared at him and then at Oviedo. Incredible! It wasn't possible that this young nephew, with the face that he had on him, facing Oviedo there, could take fighting words as calmly as did his old uncle. A wolf couldn't be afraid of a cat.

Oviedo began to understand only when Jim said:

"Yes, a ghost of one who came to get lost. As you, perhaps, are the ghost of one Ortego Peña, who came away from Huachi ten years ago—also in a hurry to get lost."

The foreman's murmur rose to a furious cat scream. "You lie! I am not—You lie! I tell you, you lie!"

All the chairs pushed all the way back. All the *vaqueros* rose. This was fighting talk direct. What could a man do after that?

Uncle Steve called authoritatively, "*Señores!* Let this thing be orderly, I beg you. It is a pity that my new foreman's coming should be, er—disturbed, in this manner. But best, perhaps, that it should be settled now."

There was no doubt in Uncle Steve's mind as to what a man must do who was still young enough to be a man. "Let us go, *señores*, to the corral, as is customary. By all means let this be orderly."

The foreman was looking this way and that, as a cat that would escape if it could, yet dares not turn its back. Jim was looking at him with his wolfish eyes.

"I don't know." he told him. "I was only twelve years old at the time. But this Ortego Peña was a man so clumsy with a machete that he had to cut people down from behind, and he ought to be

very much afraid of one named Jeem Guillermo. Perhaps you are not he. But since you have three times said that I lied, what can a man do?"

Domingo, the lithe dark man who was not afraid to admit that he wouldn't want to fight this Jeem if he could but run away, nudged his nearest neighbor. "Observe, *amigo,* this Oviedo." He grinned, and there was no regret in his voice. "Have you ever seen him so before? To me he looks to be more afraid than I ever want to be."

In the corral both men stripped their shirts. Men with drawn machetes stood between them. There would be no underhandedness about this, no taking of sudden advantage. This was not a scramble of animals; it was *duelo.*

Uncle Steve took Jim's shirt. He was confident enough, but nervous.

"Watch him, son," he warned. "He's a devil, and fast."

Jim was able to grin, thinly with indrawn breath. "Don't worry. He knows that I know what Dad knew about machete play. And he's scared."

"Parada!" the machete men who separated the duelists called. And, *"Suerte!"* Just as it might be a bullfight. They stepped apart. The foreman and the new foreman were separated only by the length of their machetes and their lunge.

The foreman was clumsy, but not quite as clumsy as Jim had guessed. Somewhere he had seen machete play, though not mastered it. He held his guard, not hanging low, the old cutlass style, but arm drawn back, ready for a wide smashing swing at his opponent. That was the way a *tigre* in the jungle stood, reared back, claws wide for the disembowelling slash.

Jim stood on bent knees and tense toes, his blade point slanted up, his knuckles up, the way he waited for a *tigre* in the jungle.

He had never been afraid of a *tigre.* So he was able to grin at the foreman with white teeth and tell him: "It seems, Ortego Peña, that I have inherited more things from my father than just a good machete. More than you will ever know. Amongst them, a debt."

Ortego Peña snarled and leaped in to swing his disembowelling slash. But Ortego, of course, couldn't swing nearly as fast as could a *tigre.* Jim had time to flash well inside of the blade and parry close in. Ortego's arm nearly severed itself at the wrist. Jim's father's machete point was in his throat. Jim's instant wrench to the left almost decapitated his father's enemy.

Blood! Jim shut his eyes against it and its memories, but he didn't walk away to be sick. He walked away to pull grass and wipe his father's blade. All in silence. The vaqueros' eyes followed him, staring.

Into the silence Jim said: "I am Jeem, the son of Jeem of Huachi. It is to be hoped that there will be no dispute about the foremanship of the Rancho Estéban of Concepcion."

That broke the tension. The fierce dark Domingo's answer suited all of them.

"Blood of ten gods!" he swore. "Not while this good plains country has room to run."

Straight at the Indian's head she leaped.

NOT TO THE SWIFT

By WILLIAM L. CHESTER

ABOVE the interlacing branches of the jungle canopy, a brassy equatorial sun laid down a fierce barrage of mid-day heat. The drone of a myriad insects hummed from every level of the forest. As if drugged by that incessant monotone, the wilderness sprawled like a drunkard in a stupor. Even the wine-dark river, winding in a brownish ribbon between the towering trees, seemed to have paused in its lazy flow.

In all the dozing forest no slumber was so deep as that of one whose dozen curving claws were hooked to the branch of a mora tree, high in the verdant cupola of the forest roof. Suspended like a sheaf of withered grass, one of the jungle's incorrigible loiterers, a mother sloth, loafed there.

Not for her the doctrine of the strenuous life. Her kind lived by the proverb "Haste makes waste; go slow, last longer." Close by, the nearest of her kin was in the act of climbing down her arm.

Oddly, though he should have been asleep, as were most of the others in his jungle world, Weary was as wakeful as his kind may be. This indicated individuality was not apparent on his surface. He was a typical baby three-toed sloth, one of the ugly ducklings of the forest, whose place was properly the warm and hollow cradle of his mother's body, as she hung head downward from her lofty swing.

His baby fur was soft as fuzz on a newborn chick; but already his climbing claws did service as he clambered slowly round and round the silent, pendent ball which was his shaggy parent.

Weary's eyes peered upward at the glittering mirrors which were leaves, reflecting the bright sunlight from above. Despite his pitiful attempts to see, but little of the wondrous sights around him ever would be visible to Weary's pale, near-sighted eyes.

It was just as well. About him was a world of stealth and lies and living falsehood, the vast hypocrisy of nature in the tropics. Far down upon the ground a seeming mound of leaves became the virulently poisonous bushmaster; that sun-splotched shadow in an open glade beside the river resolved itself into a crouching jaguar; upon the river itself those logs were alligators, and that smooth and placid surface hid its other lurking death.

Closer by, across the web of vegetation, a seeming looped liana was in fact a giant boa, waiting for an unsuspecting prey. The very mora tree, in which it so solid to the eye hung, was in reality but a hollow shell, its heart enucleated by a horde of termites; and to it hung plant-hypocrites—once creeping vines with soft, caressing tendrils, now thickened to tough death cords of strangulation, choking life out of the forest monarch.

Few things that met the eye were true. Black magic showed on every hand. Poison spiders mimicked ants; beetles impersonated wasps; dead sticks sprang alive as giant mantises; dead leaves took wings and floated off as moths; live butterflies with gaudy markings turned into brilliant leaves which actually fluttered in the slightest breeze. Other spiders leaped from the hearts of flowers onto prey.

Reversing the ordinary rule that creatures live on plants, *cordyceps*, a fungus, took root in living creatures; and almost under Weary's nose beauty was a murderess; for on his own long limb the gorgeous petals of a lovely flower closed about the gold and iridescent body of a struggling humming-bird. Death walked and crawled and flew in many guises.

But none of this was known to naïve, trusting little Weary.

Far in the blue, above the clutch of furnace heat that scorched the jungle, a harpy eagle slowly soared in endless circles, his keen eyes fixed intently on a single point.

He was an old and cunning bird, else he had never felt suspicion of that bag of brownish leaves which hung suspended from the extremity of a branch in that tall tree below. But time had taught him many things, of which one was that in the jungle things are rarely what they seem.

That bag of leaves, for instance; awhile ago it had hung nearer to the bole of that tall mora which towered above its lesser neighbors. Watchfully the harpy glided down a plane of heated air to have a closer look.

FATE decreed that Weary choose this moment, when the harpy's piercing gaze was on his mother, to climb slowly along her arm, and be an independent unit of suspension, hanging for a little while beyond her by his own small claws.

No move escaped the eagle's penetrating eye. With folding wings he changed his soar into a power dive.

Some heard the scream of wind in mighty pinions. A troop of saki monkeys multiplied their high-pitched chattering into a screech of warning and swung out of danger, all arms and tails and legs. A band of howlers roared and hid away.

The awakened mother sloth paid no attention to that plunging bolt from far above, nor did her little offspring. Theirs was the absent-minded calm of thoughtful heads, engaged in abstractions far too deep for their quick-handed neighbors.

Through crannies, cracks and parted leaves the monkey bands peered forth, the better to behold a jungle fellow's death.

The harpy eagle now was near the nadir of his plunge; altering his plane by spreading out his wings, he shot obliquely toward the sloths. Already he was faced with a decision: which of the two to seize?

Because he was a preying bird and so of a practical mind, he chose the larger as his intended victim. The eagle leveled off and reached for her as he swept by with curving beak and crooking talons. His claws sank deep. It was as if blue lightning struck the branch. The mother sloth was not torn from her vise-like hold, but the branch at which she clutched did not prove equal to the strain and split beneath her talons. She was torn free.

The watching saki monkeys chattered mightily, and from below the howlers drowned their chattering in a roaring, thunderous din.

Although the harpy beat off several yards, the she-sloth's weight was more than he could carry far. Before he could disengage his talons from the sloth's coarse side hair, the giant bird was carried down among the branches where the monkeys lingered, screaming imprecations. The eagle beat aloft again, well rid of Weary's mother and thereby thwarted of his hoped-for meal. But on his upward way the great bird found another prey.

A female howler, leaping from his path, sprang straight across the eagle's arc of flight, between two limbs. The hungry harpy clutched and missed the bounding prey, but fastened on the young one clinging to her back and tore it squealing from the shouting parent.

The howler tribes again drowned the chattering of the saki band in deep, far-carrying roars. But sound would not bring back the harpy's victim.

Nor could loud noises aid small Weary, slipping slowly from his grip upon that broken limb.

Forty feet below him, utterly unruffled by her close escape from death, the mother sloth had found a claw-hold on another limb, and fed now, leisurely, as if her infant were not calling to her in a feeble plaint from high above. Here was the ne plus ultra of maternal unconcern for her own offspring, indifference not found in any other parent creature in the swarming population of the jungle.

In startling contrast was the sorrow of the howler mother, crying piteously, almost humanly, and gazing up into the sky at that diminishing speck which was the beaked kidnaper of her little one, whom she would not see again.

THE little ape's faint cries died out. But to the miserable howler mother's ears there came another plaint which found its echo in her empty heart. It was a high and squeaking penny whistle, emanating from she knew not where. From place to place she climbed, in search of it. It sounded yet again, but with so bird-like a quality, and in such odd tone, that even her well-sharpened senses could not glimpse nor identify its owner.

She climbed part way down the tree trunk beside the dangling branch and heard the sound again. To her astonishment, what she had thought to be a pendent ant's nest reached forth a slow and gentle clawed foot, which attached itself to her fur and was followed by three others like it.

A moment she resisted, attempting to put from her this strange living cockleburr. But little Weary clung and whistled once again; his trustful helplessness won her over.

She bore her new-found mite aloft to where the forest roof was interlaced and bound together with vegetable hawsers and cables and living cords of parasitic vines, themselves festooned with other parasites—flaming orchids, ferns. Within this latticed bower, hung with its dangling loose cordage, she comforted him. And word went round among the howler band that Long-tail had a strange new infant.

Mindful and wary of the suspicious pack, Long-tail shunned it, the while she sought to feed her new adopted. But Weary had grown beyond all interest in mother's milk. Much hurt, she brought him high-smelling flowers, and rich tropic fruit, and beetles, bugs, loathesome centipedes—the choicest things she knew as food. He would not eat.

But finally, among the offerings she brought, he found a leaf—an acrid, leathery cecropia leaf—which he devoured hungrily. And Long-tail, who had run herself thin in the search for food for him, had now a chance to eat herself.

Weary called for further food. Long-

tail had no memory worth mentioning. Again she tried out fruits and insects, until by accident among the other stuffs she brought, there were cecropia leaves. Thus Weary ate, after a fashion. And Long-tail looked in monkey wonderment on this strange adopted one.

So, too, would others, whose coming sounded like a nearing gale—which, drawing closer took on the sound of cheering crowds, and finally, immediately at hand, was like the terrifying shouting of gorillas or of roaring lions.

Long-tail felt no fear upon her own account, but crouched against a tree bole and cuddled Weary in her skinny arms, her teeth bared white above him, threatening all the howler pack. Terrific din continued for a moment, then ceased when they inspected this new member of the band; only to begin afresh in querulous chatterings and bickerings as they touched and picked at him with long inquisitive fingers.

But presently their fickle attentions wandered, for there was nothing in that round soft inoffensive ball of life to hold their interest for long.

So Weary came to be accepted by the howler tribe, who dwelt upon the jungle roof, to lead a life which certainly no sloth had ever led before. Whereas his kind were made to travel slowly through the canopy, his foster-mother bore him daily on her dizzy leaping flights in the highest rafters of that towering equatorial forest attic.

Long-tail was a lithe example of young red howler monkey. A fringe of hair circled her bare, shelving features and projecting muzzle. Long chestnut-colored body-hair grew golden yellow at her back. She swung as easily by her long prehensile tail as by her arms. She sought to teach small Weary her agility—in vain. When lifted to a limb he hung inverted, motionless; nor would he move to any stimulus.

Thereafter, when she could not pull him from his grip, Long-tail, being a monkey, was unequal to the mental strain involved in loosening his twelve claws one by one. So she would hang down near him by her tail, chatter monkey baby-talk and threw her long protecting arm about him. Persuasion and that warmth which he associated with his own lost mother, soon won him over, and when she swung aloft he clung to her, a trusting, fearless little burr locked in her fur.

LONG-TAIL and her several grown-up children sported in the hanging gardens of the jungle, which were a thousand times more complex than the rigging of any sailing ship that ever floated. Loops, whorls, and swinging twisted vinery, thick ropes, thin ribbons, threads or living hawsers—such were the shrouds in which they lived and played. Such were the stranglers and garotters of the vegetable world, whose vegetable sentience taught them to reject the rotten and decayed, and fasten on the strong and living trees only, to form, at last, a pall for their once hale and hearty victims.

But the monkey brethren had small dread of their surroundings, and thanks to Long-tail's maternal care Weary grew in bulk and weight. What with this increasing burden, Long-tail grew gaunt, and lagged behind the howler pack in their far journeyings.

Yet she would not trust the object of her adoration to another. And well that she did not, for several times her former mate, a burly chatterer, made voluble threats against Weary's life and safety. Soon came a day when she could no longer carry Weary about and must hang him by his claws to some long limb until she could return. Still he remained her own, her jealous care—and woe to any other howler who approached him in hostility!

To Long-tail he seemed hopelessly inadequate to life in such a world as hers. His slowness maddened her, but in one thing she took a jealous pride: In all the howler tribe none had such a mighty grip upon a branch as Weary. Unlike her kind he would not hide from danger, but seemed to snap his fingers in the face of peril. This disdain toward hazard enlarged him in the howlers' eyes, for all of them were arrant cowards when it came to actual trouble. Not that Weary was a fighter. The blow he dealt was but a lazy forward reaching of the arm, which no one feared. But he had that which

jitterers admire, be they simian or human—an almost cataleptic calm, which nothing could disturb.

He made no nest nor shelter, but slept out indifferently in storms when she and hers huddled together in terror.

He could not even chatter. That single whistling note was all the sound he ever uttered. Song or shout or whisper, it never varied by a note.

Despite these great shortcomings, Weary blandly went his way, unhurried, undismayed. Those journeys far aloft must have infected him with wanderlust, for Long-tail never found him in the place where she had left him. Commonly he climbed to greater and more sunny heights, much to her angry disapproval. For in the blue soared great harpy eagles, whom she had good cause to recall.

In her own way she warned him, barking and growling, until her roars set all her pack-mates roaring in reverberating sympathy. But this loudest sound in all the forest left Weary utterly unmoved. He was a problem-child for Long-tail, who had other troubles, too; for she was never finished bearing sons and daughters to her monkey mate.

They and the children of the other howlers took delight in baiting and tormenting Weary; but it never troubled him. He bore it all good-humoredly until they gave it up in sheer disgust. In spite of all that there was a friendliness between them. Indeed, there must have been.

Because, one dusk, while Weary nibbled at his single monotonous diet of cecropia leaves, two of Long-tail's sons set up a shout of warning and tugged at him in an attempt to make him flee with them. Weary looked around him vacantly. His small and watery eyes did not see the fireflies, circling fantastically in sinuous, phosphorescent coils among the limbs. Giant click-beetles, sporting glittering flashes of light, sailed through the branches like fiery meteorites, now red, now green, now lemon-yellow: Their pyrotechnics all were lost on Weary.

So was the sinister glitter of two orange-glowing eyes, set in the head that sat on the flexile neck of a tayra, darting straight along the branch to which he clung.

HERE was a foe to be respected, small when mentioned with a jaguar, but a giant of its weasel kind. The swaying head was long and snakelike; the maxillary muscles of the jaw enormously developed; the brown-furred body all agility and sinewy grace. The tail was a bushy balancer in long and easy jumps it made from branch to branch, more nimbly than the nimblest squirrel. The tayra's claws and teeth were keen as knives; but its most deadly armament was the grim and tireless persistence with which it tracked, wore down and slew its prey. It this it was true weasel—remorseless, pitiless, bloodthirsty; more to be feared by youthful Weary than a tree-snake or a harpy eagle.

The brown assassin bounded past the bulbous, epiphytic growth which was Weary, hanging quietly. He coughed harsh gutturals as he gave chase to one of Long-tail's children, who easily evaded him, shouting the while for help.

Part of Weary's cloak of invisibility was his total lack of odor, even in the infinitely cunning nostrils of a tayra. But in his long and intimate association with the howler monkeys, inevitably he had acquired some of their scent. This smell now led to his detection by the hoarsely coughing tayra.

The surly little murderer paused doubtfully before that pendent mass of life, which had the dull appearance of a shaggy doormat, trodden on by many feet. Gray patches, like bits of wood or bark, bespoke the lichen actually growing in Weary's uncouth pompadour. But where his eyes denied, his nose affirmed to the tayra that here was prey, and he attacked with fierce and overswarming haste.

But Weary, even young and weaponless, was not so quickly to be overcome. The tayra bit and clawed and sank his fangs in repeatedly, though they met only coarse and tasteless hair. Yet, weasel-like, he would persist and ultimatly win, now that he was certain of the flesh and blood within this harsh exterior of leaves and straw.

Persist the tayra did, burrowing savagely closer in toward Weary's jugular. But suddenly the tayra's hearing was assailed by a sound which addled even his keen wits—the unexpected thunder of the howler-pack, returned to wake the dead with their terrific roarings. The din of it cracked in upon the tayra's bloody business like a bolt from heaven.

Your tayra loves nothing—not even murdering and blood—more than he loves the peace and silence of the jungle solitudes. The snarling little beast coughed furiously as he sprang from Weary's body, driven to distraction by the monkeys' greatest weapon, their tree-shaking voices.

When he had gone angrily upon his way, the monkey band drew around and looked with awe and admiration upon their strange companion, whom nothing great or small could frighten.

Life, too, went on. Gaudy toucans in yellow, black and red; vivid green and orange parrots, and crimson-yellow macaws made mingled medley. Here in the forest roof, the gloomy silence of the graveyard depths was far below. The terrific competition seemed lost in beauty, but it was present, none the less.

Creepers with violet blossoms; yawarridans whose spikes were yellow as live gold; bush-ropes showing masses of rosy racemes to the sun—all evidenced it. All the climbing and upward struggle of the parasites was but to offer flowery tribute to the sun-god. And other plants there were, called phyllodendrons by the knowing, which clung to the high branches and sent down roots through the free air, like wire plumb-lines searching for the fertile earth.

Crimson sheets of creeper-flowers hung in chain-like garlands from one tree-top to another. Round the brilliant orange blossoms of the iteballi, which glowed like Chinese lanterns, clouds of butterflies hovered, seemingly like blossoms taking wing.

WEARY shunned the beauty for the shadow, climbing slowly earthward toward fresh hazard, followed by the faithful Long-tail, who was the first to see it, and cry warning.

Twisted into close-wound coils, a sirocucu raised its hideous head at their approach. Its reddish-yellow scales, rough as pineapple skin, were crossed by ebon bands in rhomboidal designs. Back from the fixed glare of the cold unwinking eyes, down to the end of the mouth, a black streak ran. The terrible bushmaster seemed to smile. But when the jaws came wide, it was a ghastly death's head grin, revealing forward-springing fangs almost two inches long and laden with a charge of virulence which was quick death to blood and tissue.

Unseeing, Weary swung along above the lithe and slender terror. The balancing scaly head drew slowly back, then darted forward, sinking its dread hypodermics deep and jetting out the killing venom. Twice and again it struck, with vicious clamping bites. Well, now, for Weary that his mat of hair was deep and thick, else he had died within the hour. But even against such poison as this his thatch was proof. Weary, master of the parried blow, went along his gentle way, with Long-tail following, full of fear.

What spirit motivated Weary to seek other pastures was known only to himself. The distant forest on the river's other bank was no greener, nor would the leathery cecropia leaves prove more succulent nor more abundant there than where he was. Whim moved him. In him was the vagabonding urge to go, however slowly, toward someplace else than where he was.

His dull gaze took in the mirror surface of the river, sixty feet below. Even to his near-sighted eyes there was temptation in the coolness it suggested. His grip upon his branch loosened. Then Weary plummeted. He struck bomblike upon the water. A drinking puma sprang away in sudden fright.

Weary bobbed up promptly, thanks to the buoyant air imprisoned in his rough gray-greenish thatch. He swam deliberately, but with ease, toward the farther bank. He was not yet halfway across when around about him the waters of the river boiled with vicious life. A swarm of deadly perai fish had taken notice of his splash and movements, and now rushed to him.

A tapir, peccary or jaguar would then and there have perished, stripped of life and flesh by countless small but savage jaws. Weary merely rolled himself into a ball, presenting nothing but the brittle coarseness of his outer hair to their assault.

The sluggish current bore him slowly down the stream. He dimly felt the hail-like blows which were the perai fish, attacking hopefully but with as little satisfaction as if he were a bale of hay. Indifferent, Weary drifted until the swarm abandoned him in favor of some other swimming creature more immediately edible.

Then only did he once again uncurl, none the worse for a breathless immersion of fifteen or twenty minutes, to find himself almost upon what seemed a half-submerged log.

Logs, trees or branches and his climbing-irons had a natural attraction for each other. Weary took strong hold upon the log, sank deeply the three claws of one fore foot, and sought to drag himself out of the water.

The log came suddenly to life, incarnate in the mighty body of an alligator, whose tail was not too tough and horny to feel the clutch of Weary's piercing grip. The jungle saurian, lurking in the hope of seizing a tapir when it drank, thrashed in fierce surprise. Its armored tail swung back and forth, flail-fashion.

But having seized, Weary gripped and held, as to some lofty branch storm-lashed, enduring such a buffeting as would have crushed a lesser spirit in a greater body. And in the end it was the alligator which took flight, lacking several scales and all its cold composure.

Hurled deep amid the thickets by the last thrash of the saurian's tail, Weary reached forth tentatively, found an overhanging limb and climbed back unconcernedly into higher realms of tropic greenery, more suited to his nature. He ascended some fifty feet, with what, for him, was a true burst of speed; it took him one full hour. He plucked and nibbled at a leaf without enthusiasm, and halfway through the process yielded to the greatest passion of his life—the love of sleep. The leaf remained between his lips as Weary took a short siesta—ten hours of dreamless slumber.

ABOUT him all was life and movement. Humming birds flashed by in glittering panoply of ruby, rose and silver. Woodpeckers drilled the branch on which he hung and rattled on in endless noisy carpentry. Calf-birds bellowed from the canopy. A bell-bird rang its notes from far above; and crisp profanity descended from some lofty place where monkeys held a loud but senseless conference. A spider toiled to spin its gleaming trap, affixing several anchor-strands to this still, suspended body, hanging like a bunch of leaves. But Weary, Rip Van Winkle of the jungle, slumbered on.

The burning sun rose high and all was still at hot mid-day, save for the dull and murmuring vibration which was the movements of the teeming insect world in plant and air and earth. Then, as the brazen shield descended in the west, life was renewed again, until night fell with the silent startling suddenness of a kidnapper's cloak.

Ushering in the hunting hours, the squeak of myriad bats began and was obliterated by the coughing, booming overtones of countless frogs, in swamp below and in the trees about. Still Weary slept, until at last, roused gently by the cool of evening, he awoke quietly, beginning where he had left off upon the leaf still in his mouth. The workings of his frowsy lips were like those of a senile tramp who chews a cut of plug.

A black trumpeter sounded its bass trombone boom from somewhere in the darkened greenery. Attracted by that out-of-season note, the eyes of one who passed with silent tread below rolled up, like glowing emeralds having at their cores red-fired rubies. And now, whom others took no notice of, Stillfoot the jaguar saw, and licked his chops with wet, pink-velvet tongue.

With floating and elastic bound the black-rosetted prowler gained a limb above the trail, then climbed to Weary's level.

If Weary glimpsed that lithe and supple-muscled dealer-out of sudden death approaching, he gave no sign. He

was of those who take what comes in relaxed tranquility. The slightly imbecilic expression of him did not change. He made no answering show of force when Stillfoot, creeping out along the bending limb below that which bore Weary, bared his white and slavering poniards.

To pit against those weapons of the jaguar, Weary had a coat-of-mail peculiarly his own, as was that passive maddening resistance he was capable of offering.

Cautiously the handsome jungle underworldling slashed at Weary with a hook-armed paw. His blow, which would have crushed a monkey, made no more impression on Weary's shaggy outside hair than would a rake against a bale of hay; he swayed, and that was all.

Enraged at his own failure to do harm, Stillfoot sought to strike his claws deep through that outer hair and drag his prey down bodily. Each of the sloth's twelve hook-like claws resisted this attempt to pull him loose. If Weary had no armament, his grip at least was strong as steel. Not all the power in two jaguars' bodies could pluck a sloth like Weary from his perch.

BALKED and furious, Stillfoot struck repeatedly at this insensate ball of life. To do so he must sacrifice one fourth of his own grip upon the swaying limb and throw his blows against two coats of felted hair and matted fur, growing from a skin so tough it could turn the arrows of an Indian; all bolstered by a set of twenty slat-like ribs, upon which bony lattice-work Weary's outer armor was toughly overlaid.

The blows of Stillfoot fell with the fury of frustration. The jaguar overreached, this time with both forepaws, retaining but half his normal hold upon the limb. The branch broke off below him suddenly. Luckily for Stillfoot, his claws had sunken into Weary's shaggy mat. So that, although his hind-legs churned the air of space, his deep-clutching forepaws clung to Weary.

Now indeed the sloth's great ally worked for him. The pull of gravitation threw the fear of falling into Stillfoot's savage heart. Weary, now, was but a living avenue to safety on the branch above. But though Stillfoot was agile to the last degree, his litheness served not here. Twist as he did, and writhe, in the attempts to gain that upper branch, escape evaded him. The long and springy limb rose up and sank beneath the efforts of the gorgeous spotted cat. His struggles slowly ceased until he hung down, spent, clinging only by the claws of one distended paw. Not to the strong this time the victory, but to the more tenacious. Weary's grip was like the clutch of baling-hooks, and already Stillfoot was tiring. To Weary time meant nothing. To Stillfoot it meant life —survival.

Ferocity had turned to fear as Stillfoot stared with glaring eyeballs down through the green-black depths that led to death. A hundred feet—not even he could bear the shock of such a fall. The sun would rise upon the battered, flattened pelt of Stillfoot lying dead, his wonderful activity at final end, the writhing rubber muscles lax below the splendid gleaming coat. The green Guiana forest would be poorer for this passing of one of its reigning nobles.

The jaguar's claws were now at painful stretch. He could not long hold forth. His tongue hung out in red exhaustion; his tail was limp.

And Weary? Weary gnawed a coarse cecropia leaf, aware of that great drag upon his body, and patiently awaiting its release, his vise-like grip upon the branch unshaken.

The jaguar's hour had almost come. In his extremity a piteous cat-like mew broke from that once ferocious mouth. A sound like that from such a source must melt a heart of stone. As if Weary had heard that pitiable *mea-culpa* of a jungle criminal begging for his life, and at the bottom of his philosophic heart found pity for a beast in such extremity, the sloth stirred slowly to activity.

Reaching forward, Weary clambered inward toward the stout main tree-hole. Stillfoot struck against the trunk. Instinctively his sharp claws clutched and gripped. The spotted baron's life was saved; his sinister beauty was preserved to haunt the glades again.

Within easy reach of the jaguar, Weary hung with his foolish upside-down face smiling idiotically at the enemy. Stillfoot returned the grin with trembling lips, as one might quiveringly smile to hide awe from a prodigy. But as his strength returned, Stillfoot drew back and back, eyes ever on those mild, inverted features.

Then suddenly his feline nerves went all to pieces. The jaguar wheeled and scrambled down from branch to branch, ridden hard as if by hags of nameless terror.

Some monkeys, who miss nothing that goes on amid the jungle, saw the forest noble's undignified moonlit retreat, and laughed and jeered.

But Weary took no notice of Stillfoot or of them. He was asleep.

MORNING came like sudden fire in the east, welcomed in by the unearthly rumble of the howler pack. Brilliant toucans yelped in answer, like barking puppies. Chattering harshly and discordantly, the parrot tribes shrieked the day into its second hours.

A family of bats who had attached themselves to Weary as to a stationary object, took startled wing when he at last woke up. And now passed one who neither walked nor flew, but flowed between two branches high aloft as if afloat on air. As much at home high up as on the ground, the lithe tree boa glided through the hanging gardens.

Its wicked head, so broad and big as seemingly to weight the creature down, was poised upon its extremely long and slender neck. Its snout was roughly pointed, spear-like, but at the temples bulged and swelled with muscle, which actuated long and formidable seizing-teeth in either jaw. Spotted and barred with brown on back and sides, with licking tongue the jungle strangler glided sinuously forward, along the limb which sheltered Weary, and suddenly lay motionless.

With this cessation of all movement the boa seemed to melt from view and be absorbed into its background. And thus one hung, the other lay outstretched; Weary a living termite nest; the boa in the semblance of a giant vine, well flattened against the tree; each one unconscious of the other.

Now, if ever, Weary had cause to beware. Yet never a gleam of fear or curiosity enlivened his dull eyes. He hung in perfect stillness, depending solely on his cloak of green invisibility; for with the rains the sleeping brownish lichen in his hair had come to life to make him as the sprouting leaves in color. Although not many feet away, neither the serpent's unblinking eyes nor its nervous hearing tongue detected Weary, wrapped in his outermost defensive robe.

Down with a whoop from the rafters of the jungle came Leather-lungs, the mate of Long-tail, intent upon an hour of indulgence in his favorite pastime—baiting of the harmless Weary.

With picky fingers he pinched and prodded cruelly, seeking to unhook the twelve strong claws which fastened Weary to his anchorage. Intent upon a cunning scheme to send Weary plummeting to death, he did not see the muscular coils of the boa swell and bulge, the head draw backward on the looping neck; he did not see the stony fixity of those cold lidless eyes.

When hearing warned him, Leather-lungs jumped like a jack out of its box. Unluckily his leap was up, not out. As he came down a scaly thick triangular head shot forward, wide jaws gaping. Monkey was never born who could elude a boa's flash-like strike in these conditions. The boa's long recurving dog-teeth clamped on Leather-lungs, whose shout of terror was literally down the throat of living death. He roared but twice thereafter, each time upon a higher shrieking note.

Two thickly muscled coils lapped round him, before the great hydraulic press which was the boa's vast constricting strength began to squeeze. Leather-lungs, the quick, was soon quite dead. Weary, the deliberate and sedentary survived. Again the race was to the slow.

As if the serpent's very presence cast a pall, a strange uneasy languor filled the forest. The flaming sun was veiled; the sky grew dull. A tropic storm came

tramping through the jungle like a giant whose tread was thunder, and whose breath the rising wind.

High branches now abraded one another. Ripe fruits came hurtling down, with branches large and small in endless shower. Then suddenly the rain crashed like a fluid avalanche. The storm god blew tornadoes, amputated limbs, plucked great trees like weeds and cracked the ten-lash whip of lightning over all.

Gigantic splay-footed moras, stately kuruballis, tall rounded baramallis and clustering manicole and eta palms, kings of the forest all, bent the knee and bowed the head in homage to the wind. Thunder rumbled like bass laughter in a hollow cave. Rivers flowed where had been tropic earth.

The monkey brethren cowered, trembling, near where Weary dozed indifferent to the warring of the elements; as if they envied him his monumental courage, and sought to share it.

As if floodgates had been slammed shut, suddenly the downpour ceased. The storm passed on. The forest remained, like a ship surviving hurricane, its bush-rope cordage wrecked and dangling.

THE storm marked a red letter day in Weary's life. There were no outward indications that it would be such. Great blue flashing dragon-flies glittered in the freshened air like airplane miniatures. Great hairy mygales spun fresh webs as thick and coarse as muslin, in which to trap the lesser birds. Morpho butterflies in metallic hues flew by in their spectacular flight. The otter in the river dived again.

But suddenly there was a different kind of stillness. Man had come, intruding. A slender dugout craft appeared upon the swollen surface of the river, laden deep with mandioca cakes, bound round with vines and covered with green leaves; it also bore farinha kernels and bananas.

A dark-skinned Indian propelled the craft. His rounded copperish face was marked on cheek and jaw and brow with the orange-red of achiote-pod, to indicate his tribe and place of origin. Beside him lay his blow-gun, made from husk of chonta palm. About his neck, slung each by a fiber cord, were quiver filled with bamboo darts, a gourd packed full of kapok, and a second with lethal *curari*, black and viscid, deadly poison.

The dark eyes, peering from the slanting lids below his straight long bang of coarse black hair, roved up among the festooned branches. They gleamed at sight of Long-tail cursing him from high above. His chonta-wood spear would never carry far enough. He set his paddle down, took out a dart and scored its sharpened end with a piranha fish's saw-like jaw-bone. A wisp of kapok he twisted round the dart's blunt end, then thrust the dart into the mouthpiece of his blowgun, made of jaguar-bone.

He sighted down the narrow tube, a monkey-stew in mind, then breathed into the blow-gun sharply. Forth sped the poisoned dart and like a bird in flight winged upward through the branches, straight toward Long-tail.

But midway in its flight a branch deflected it off to one side. Long-tail chattered in defiance. Beguiled by her bold manner, the savage put another dart into his gun. Before he shot again the mystery of the monkey's bravery had cleared. The Indian saw Weary reach forth slowly, and saw the howler monkey try to cover him. Grinning with his recognition of the curious alliance, he set aside his blow-gun, drew up his craft along the bank, and climbed into the branches, intent on capturing the sloth. That tough skin would make an admirable shield.

Higher and higher climbed the naked savage. Louder grew the cries of Long-tail, until her roars reverberated through the jungle. The Indian now clung on a level with herself and had started out along the branch to which Weary hung before she backed away.

Relying on her fear of him, he reached to seize the sloth, when Long-tail sprang to the defense. Straight at the Indian's head she leaped. Her tail wrapped round his neck, the while she bit and scratched, maternal fury whelming all her dread of Man.

Assailed thus far above the ground, the savage lost his hold and tumbled, bit-

ten ten times as he dropped, his long fall broken only by the intervening branches. Upon the ground she clutched him still, but now his greater strength prevailed. The Indian cast her off and reached to seize his spear of chonta wood.

Stunned momentarily, Long-tail came at him again. One quick thrust pierced her through the arm. Dismayed by agony of pain, she leaped to make good her escape. But now her great agility was gone. She seized but could not hold a branch. Before she could collect herself the hard-wood spear impaled her through the back and pinned her, writhing, hard against the trunk.

The blow was death. She shuddered and hung limply, a pitiable little martyr to the cause of jungle motherhood.

THE savage drew his crucifying spear away and flung her body callously into the tangled bush. He saw with satisfaction that a swarm of ants, grim white-wings of the tropics, immediately took possession. He did not pause to note the size and color of the insects, but climbed aloft again, this time to disentangled Weary, claw by claw, from his strong grip, and bear him slowly toward the ground.

He set one naked foot upon the earth, not yet aware that he stood in the wake of death. Realization stung him with a thousand white-hot clamps. A cry escaped the Indian, shrill with fear. He sought to draw the member up, but nervous terror too, had hold of him, so that he lost his hand-grip on the lowest branch and fell amid a crawling host of army ants, whose legions blackened all the earth for half an acre round about.

Encumbered by the captive Weary, he flung the sloth far out into the river currents and sprang back to the branch he had just quitted, his lower limbs dark with the clinging, stinging warriors. The branch he seized, alive with ants, slipped in his hands. Columns of the stinging legionaries flowed down his wrists and arms to swarm upon the wounds which Long-tail had inflicted at his neck and face.

The wild gust of his scream blew insects from his parted lips. But now his face was masked in stinging demons who entered with his breath, and invaded his ears, deafening all hearing. The Indian fought the crawling horde as with the strength of twenty men—blind men, for they had found his eyes.

They, too, were blind. To them his greater size and strength meant nothing. The Indian rolled and threshed, not on the ground but on the swarming carpet of the driver-trillions.

And then the ant hordes dropped upon the final scene their living curtain of conclusion, between whose swarming folds, once drawn together, there can be no escape for any living thing . . . .

Adrift upon the river like some well-worn, cast-off doormat, Weary grounded far downstream upon a muddy bar. Lying on his side, he reached indolently forward, dragging himself inch by inch toward the nearest hanging vine. Then, like an old man, tired of the struggles of this earth, he climbed slowly, hand over hand, up toward the moon's bright silver shield, just rising in the distant east.

He had been twice bereaved, but Weary's was to bear all woes in silence. His pale blue eyes had often seen the victors die defeated, victims of their own fierce arrogance. Yet sudden death had brushed him with dark wings, and passed him by almost unnoticed.

He found another sloth high in a towering ceiba crown, and made a few half-hearted passes which she ignored. She seemed too sleepy to resist. He was too languid to prevail.

But for such sloths as they there was no need to hurry. Haste, the wastrel in most other lives, was not a part of theirs. Tomorrow was another day, and they had time to burn. Even love could wait.

Far below, the treacherous jungle, enemy of all its denizens and friend to none, was full of life and strife and war. Side by side, like dangling squirrel-nests, Weary and his mate hung quietly, in peaceful tolerance and dignified humility, islands of unruffled calm upon the violent sea of life.

Which may be why their race survives most others on the earth.

The killer had smelled blood.

HELL SHIP

A Fact Story

By WAYNE FRANCIS PALMER

JUST after the war I was sent to Belgrade with an Allied junketing commission and there ran into Alekseef. Just one of those casual things, it was. On passing a little restaurant, I was drawn into it by the lively minor strains of an excellent string orchestra. Inside, under the half light, I saw the floor alive with whirling gypsy dancers, their skirts billowing up about their lithe bodies.

I looked for an empty table but there was none. A man sitting alone noted my fix and pointed to the empty chair opposite him. It was Alekseef. Many times again we met there, drinking as we talked long hours away. Slowly I got to know the strange story of this outcast who, although an unwilling actor, had held the center of the stage in a drama that for two weeks had gripped the entire world in its suspense of horror, destruction and death. His story was the story of the mutiny ship, *Potemkin*. Here it is, as he told it to me.

The *Potemkin* (Alekseef said) was a hell ship from the day she was commissioned. Our crew complained about their quarters, their food, that we still had some dockyard workers aboard—in fact they complained about everything.

This wasn't fair, because the *Potemkin* was a beautiful ship, just taken over from the builders. Her great gray hull carried the hopes of the Russian Navy which had been so shattered by the Japanese at Tsushima.

When she was commissioned she was turned over to her officers and crew with the admonition: "Love and take care of the ship as a mother takes care of her child."

Breaking in any new ship is a trying job, but the *Potemkin* was a madhouse. Ordinarily, undesirables were kept out of the fleet, but we drew the scum from the barracks ashore—agitators, malcontents, deserters, thieves and criminals of all kinds. We were poorly officered and poorly manned.

There was one man in particular, Matushenko, who was notorious throughout the Black Sea forces. He looked the brute that he later proved himself to be. I doubt if in all history there's ever been a more bloodthirsty killer. He killed for the love of killing.

Trouble flared into the open one day when several sailors complained that the meat was spoiled. The ship's surgeon, Dr. Smirnoff, was called, and when he saw that it actually was bad, rather than have it destroyed, he ordered the cooks to boil it with an equal amount of good meat.

This of course made a rotten mess, but he said so they could hear, "It's good enough for the men."

The crew refused to eat it, and I didn't blame them. Later Matushenko and his kind made much of this.

Things went from bad to worse, until finally the situation became so acute that the captain thought it best to leave the rest of the fleet and go to some point where we could get the ship's company into a better frame of mind.

That's why we left Sevastopol and were anchored alone off the mainland in the Gulf of Tendra when disaster broke.

FATE had picked a strange and beautiful setting for the horrors to follow. The sea about us was turquoise blue, lined at the mainland with great rolling hills rising from the water's edge. Vineyards, orchards and gardens here and there broke the deep greens of the forests.

As I stood my deck watch that morning, fairly drinking in the sunshine and beauty, I saw a torpedo boat approaching us rapidly, flying the "provision" flag. Before it was alongside I had a working party waiting to shift the supplies that it carried.

It wouldn't seem, with things on the *Potemkin* in such a state, that our supply officer would try to make them worse, yet when I sent men for the meat, it was so foul that they could hardly be forced to carry it to the galley. Standing under the warm sun out on the unsheltered deck of the little boat, it had completely spoiled. Maggots could be seen crawling over it.

When lunch time came that day the men drank their wine and tea but ate only bread. The soup and meat they wouldn't touch—just pushed it away from under their noses and sat there swearing and complaining because they were forced to work from five in the morning until six at night without decent food.

It was our second in command, Executive Officer Gillarovsky, who brought into eruption the volcano that had been forming for months. He had little but his strength to commend him, Tall, built like an ox, blustering and bulldozing, he had tried by force to whip our ship's company into shape. It wasn't his firmness with the men; it was his cussedness that got on everyone's nerves. So now, not content with serving bad food, he was such a tyrant that he was bound the men would eat it.

The captain was called. The bugler and drummer were ordered to play *Assembly*. The sailors hurried in an orderly manner to their positions on both sides of the quarterdeck aft, while Captain Golikoff and Commander Gillarvosky took their places between the two lines.

"Dr. Smirnoff," the captain demanded,

"please advise if this plate of food is fit for consumption."

"It is, sir," the doctor replied, without tasting it. He didn't even raise it to his face, probably because it smelled so. "The men are getting fat, sir. I don't see why they're always complaining."

"If the food's good, why don't you eat it yourself?" yelled one of the sailors in the rear ranks.

"Shut up, damn you," roared Gillarovsky, as he tried to see who had talked out of turn.

The captain must have known of the injustice he was working, but that didn't make any difference.

"The doctor finds that the food is entirely satisfactory," he announced. "This complaining is getting to be a habit. We're going to settle the matter right now.

"All those who'll eat this soup, come alongside the twelve-inch turret," he ordered. "If any of you men don't want it, we have a place for you, too." He pointed up to the yardarm.

You know, any man may wish his stomach well, but what good's a stomach if his neck's been stretched out of place? Probably reasoning this way, they decided to eat the food rather than be hanged, and all moved forward to the turret.

The captain and executive officer, seeing that all were complying, held up about thirty and ordered them to stop. They didn't want to be made to look like fools before the whole ship's company. They had to have some victims.

"So you don't want to eat the food, do you? Guards, on deck!" roared the captain.

The guards dashed up, rifles in hand, and surrounded the stragglers.

"March them aft," the captain bellowed. "Here, you, get up a large tarpaulin from below to throw over the bodies of these villains."

A murmur ran through the sailors.

"God, they're going to shoot those men just because they won't eat maggots! No one was raising any hell about it. Everyone was quiet, just pushed the food aside. God, what a thing to do, to kill those men!" The murmur grew to an angry protest.

THEY were right, because the men facing the firing squad were innocent of any agitation or trouble. They were just a handful of boys marked to pay the price of the captain's anger. One little chap from the wheat fields of the Ukraine was in my division. I saw him standing there with terror in his eyes. There wasn't a trouble maker in the lot, yet they were going to be shot down with little more consideration than you would swat a swarm of flies.

The men around the turret couldn't stand to see their comrades slaughtered. They did the only thing possible. They ran for weapons. Below decks it suddenly turned to bedlam. The men wanted to do something to help their mates, but not knowing what, they merely ran about screaming in their futility. A few, however, were able to make their way forward to the armory, where they grabbed rifles and revolvers.

On topside the captain again ordered the bugler to sound *Assembly*. This routine call came as a relief to everyone. Most of the ship's company didn't want trouble, so they went up on the quarterdeck and fell in at their accustomed places.

The captain, sensing the seriousness of the situation, and knowing that his blundering had precipitated the long-expected mutiny, decided to release the thirty men who stood facing death. Even then the situation might have been smoothed over but for his stupidity and pride.

"All those," he ordered, "that didn't join in the mutiny, line up behind me so that we can take your names. We'll find out who are the loyal ones. Here, Alekseef, Lirensoff, Makaroff, and Lastrebzoff, make a list of these men. We'll take care of the others." The unlimited stubbornness of the man was amazing. But he was soon to pay for it, and at a good price, too.

From on top of the turret a rifle, with bayonet attached, hurtled through the air at the captain. It struck the deck bayonet first, and its sharp point impailed itself in the wood. The rifle butt swung back in the air and struck the

captain a stiff blow. Mad as hell, he fairly roared at the guards, "Shoot any man that moves!"

Just then Gunner Vakulinchuck came up the ladder from below. He was always a good influence among the men—certainly no mutineer or agitator. When he was stopped by the guards he said quietly, "I want to speak to the executive officer."

"Stop or we'll shoot," a guard snapped back.

"What? Will you brothers shoot your own comrades?" he demanded.

Gillarovsky fairly shrieked at the guard. "Shoot him! Shoot him!"

Not knowing whom to obey, or sensing what he should do, the guard jumped in the hatchway and fled down the ladder.

With a look of supreme contempt in his eyes, Gillarovsky raised his own revolver, aimed at the gunner and fired. At the same time Matushenko, who had edged forward, fired at the executive officer. When the smoke had cleared away two men lay on deck: Vakulinchuck, mortally wounded, and Gillarovsky.

"I'll get even with you for that, you villain!" Gillarovsky spat at Matushenko, but he never did, for the killer had smelt blood. Walking over to the executive officer, he kicked him viciously in the head with his heavy boots, and then poured two more bullets into his body.

Everyone drew back in horror and disgust. Matushenko glowered at his fellows from under his heavy brows. Reaching his long, apelike arms down to the deck, he scooped up the body of Gillarovsky as though it were that of a child and strode with it to the port side, leavin a trail of three thin lines of blood across the white deck. As he reached the rail he turned and dropped the body into the sea. No one had dared to fire at him.

SUDDENLY a shout came from up in the tops. "Shoot the officers!"

Immediately bullets whined about those on deck as everyone dashed for safety. It made little difference who the mutineers hit, officers or men, so they poured their fire indiscriminately into the group below. Caught like rats, without arms or protection, some tore off their clothes and dove into the glassy sea, while others went overboard in full uniform. Many of them sank to their death as soon as they hit the water. Those who were able to swim struck out for the nearby torpedo boat, only to be shot as they made their slow way.

The white belly of a shark showed among the swimmers as a great man-eater rolled to tear at one of them. With a piercing scream a sailor was dragged below and only a swirl of pink bubbles marked his grave. Well, what a sight there was after that!

There was a rush of swimmers back to the ship. Pleading for help, they clung to the armor shelf, not wanting to chance the shark-infested waters, and at the same time fearing the human killers above. A few of them did climb up, and with the aid of their friends on the gun deck they went through the ports to safety. Many however, merely served as easy targets for the mutineers, who by this time had complete control of the topside.

Early in the mêlée I had fled with the captain to his cabin. As we hurried through the door we were horrified to see half a dozen sailors standing there. We leveled our revolvers but the men cried out that they were not mutineers.

The captain and I ripped off our clothes, intending to dive overboard and swim for it, but as we made for the port the sailors blocked our way.

You'll only be killed out there, *sir*. We'll hide you below. We know a safe place. We'll stand by you, *sir*, to the death if necessary!"

This seemed to bring the captain to his senses for the first time that day. "Why should I flee, Alekseef? After all it's my fault, and I'm to blame. I believe that death is inevitable, and I propose to meet it like a man." The captain offered me a cigarette, and even passed them to the men.

The sudden, sharp report of a broadside gun shook our already frayed nerves. We saw that the torpedo boat had hoisted anchor and was moving toward us. A second shell fell just off her stern, and a third hit her bridge. Her com-

manding officer called through a megaphone that he would not attack and would even join the mutineers.

The men who had been firing the gun, however, soon found new targets close at hand. Training down as close as they could to the water, they fired pointblank at such officers as they could reach. They couldn't miss, and when a shell struck it blew the victim to bits.

"Let's go down to the captain's cabin," we heard the mutineers shout on the upper deck.

There was a rattle of heavy boots down the steel ladder, and then a violent blow on the locked room. The sailors, forgetting their pledges, rushed to the port and dove overboard. There we stood alone, the captain and I.

"Open up! Open up, or we'll fire," came through the door.

"Please, unlock the door and admit them," the captain ordered calmly.

I stepped forward, turned the bolt and swung open the door.

There in the darkness of the corridor stood Matushenko, a revolver in each hand and a look of lust and hate on his face. Behind him ranged other men with rifles.

"Take them on deck," ordered Matushenko. "This time we'll say who's to do the shooting."

He stepped forward and slapped the captain a violent blow across the face with his open hand.

"Get moving, you dog," he snarled.

Captain Golikoff's only reply was to draw his body up to its full height. With such dignity as was possible for one dressed only in his underclothing, he stepped through the door into the passageway beyond. I followed him. I was sick with fear.

"Alekseef, they'll spare you," whispered the captain. "You've always been so friendly with the men. They'll not harm you. If they insist, take the ship under your command and save it for Russia—"

He was interrupted by the mutineer, Syroff, who wanted to kill him right there, but Matushenko ordered, "No, no, not here—up on deck. Don't you think the others want to see this thing killed?"

GOLIKOFF may have been a tyrant and very much of a fool, but he was certainly no coward. Without batting an eye he climbed the ladder and strode onto the quarter-deck, every inch an officer. Perhaps two hundred men stood or lolled about.

Golikoff swept a quick gaze around him and said, "I know that it's all my fault. I am sorry, brothers, and I am ready."

"You demoted me," Syroff fairly shrieked, "Now, damn you, you're going to die for it."

He raised his revolver and fired—but missed. The captain crossed himself and whispered a prayer, but he didn't flinch a bit.

"No, you don't, Syroff!" yelled Matushenko. "He's mine!" The gun was fired so close that it blew off the top of Golikoff's head. His body stood erect for an instant as blood spurted into the air and covered his face; then it crumpled and fell into a heap on the deck of his ship.

Once more the killer scooped up the body in his powerful arms, and strode to the rail, where he tossed it over. As he turned and advanced towards me I noticed that one side of his white uniform was covered with blood.

I stood erect, trying to think only of how brave the captain had been and how soon it would be over.

"Ensign Alekseef, we'll not touch you because you've been a good officer to us. You're our new captain!"

Perhaps more through shock than because of any qualms, for life is sweet, I replied mechanically, "No, kill me too. I don't want to be your captain after what I've seen."

The crowd pressed in on me, all urging and waving their hands. They looked half awed.

"No one'll kill you," they shouted. "You will be captain and take us to Odessa."

Before I knew what was happening several of them had swung me up onto their shoulders and started to parade around the deck. I was no sooner in this impossible position than I saw Lieutenant Neupokeoff step around the side of

the turret. With a howl of rage, Matushenko streaked after him, firing his revolver.

I ordered the men to drop me, but they didn't understand. I yelled at them, forbidding any more murders, but by the time I had caught the attention of the cheering mob Matushenko had put his third bullet into the popular, kindly young Neupokeoff.

I tore myself loose and rushed at the murderer just as he had thrown the body overboard.

"Matushenko," I ordered, "if I am to command this ship, there'll be no more killings; do you understand?"

"You'll command the ship," Matushenko snapped back. "I'll see to that, but I'll not stop until all of the other officers are dead. That's my job. Now go to the captain's cabin and wait there." Obviously there was nothing else for me to do.

I had no more than dropped into a chair when bedlam seemed to cut loose below decks. There was a rush of feet up the ladders and suddenly a group of men burst into my room.

"Run for your life, sir! Dive overboard! Get away from the ship as fast as you can. Lieutenant Tohn is in the powder magazine and is going to blow up the ship. For God's sake, run!"

I DIDN'T run, because I was so sick at heart that I didn't care what happened. It was some time later that one of the men slipped into my cabin and told me what had really taken place.

"Matushenko was walking along the berth deck," the lad told me. "He had a gun in each hand, boiling for trouble. He ordered me to undog a water-tight door and you can be sure I did it, and fast too, but as I swung it open, there stood Lieutenant Tohn. I swear I didn't know he was there!

"He told Lieutenant Tohn sarcastically that that was no place for a gentleman and an officer of the Czar to hide away and ordered him to step out in the light and take off his shoulder straps.

"Lieutenant Tohn told Matushenko that he wasn't afraid of him and that because he hadn't given him his shoulder straps, he didn't have the right to order him to take them off.

"These were his last words, because before he could free his revolver he had fallen with a bullet in his heart. Then his body was thrown into the sea. It all happened so fast that the other sailors didn't realize."

After Matushenko killed Tohn he seemed to go mad. He dashed from one side of the ship to the other, screaming and yelling that the sailors were hiding the officers from him. Near the galley he met the priest and hammered him over the head with the butt of a rifle. But the other sailors, in disgust, were organizing against him and saved the priest from further harm.

Matushenko found three more officers and shot them down as though they were dogs. The more he killed the wilder he became, but also the more determined the men became against him. A quick check up indicated that all officers had been accounted for excepting Smirnoff. Search parties were sent over the ship to locate him, but without any luck. Eight officers who had been rescued, but not marked for death, were locked into one of the water-tight holds well below the water line, and an armed sentry guarded them against the killer.

A messenger was sent to my room with orders for me to report on the bridge. There I found Matushenko toying with his revolver, so when he ordered me to get the ship under way for Odessa I didn't put up any argument.

We had hardly steadied on our course before the unfortunate Smirnoff was dragged onto the bridge. When he saw me he whimpered, begging for protection, but he must have known that I couldn't help him.

Matushenko sent for a piece of the meat that had caused all of the trouble and ordered the doctor to eat it, but he wouldn't touch it.

"What, you refuse? You said it was making us fat. Yes, the maggots were. Well, if you can't eat what you order for others, it's overboard for you!" The men hesitated, whereupon Matushenko pointed his gun at the soldiers. "Over! Over with the dog or I'll shoot you. Hurry, now!"

In fear of the killer, they seized the doctor and threw him from the bridge into the sea. I watched him swimming until we had left him perhaps a mile astern, then he disappeared beneath the water.

THE *Potemkin* held on her course, and I didn't leave the bridge until we had dropped anchor in the harbor of Odessa. We took up a position where our guns could command the city. It was dusk of a beautiful, clear evening. The last rays of the setting sun still glistened on the golden dome of a church on the hill above the harbor. The lights of the lower city were just blinking on but the merchant ships in the harbor were already ablaze with lights. The small craft moving about set the water dancing and flashing like a field of diamonds.

As I stood there I thought of the hours of uncertainty ahead of us. A majority of the men were by no means mutineers. Out of the seven hundred aboard, perhaps not one hundred were intent on the destruction of their ship. The rest were loyal, but intimidated and without leaders.

One boat was sent ashore with all of the officers excepting myself. I didn't know at the time that two of the mutineers had gone in this boat to tell the local revolutionary committee of the day's happenings on the *Potemkin* and to prepare for the events of the next day. Later I was to feel that perhaps no two men ever went on a mission carrying more terror, murder, and destruction than those two. Remember, that up to this time no one but those on board knew of the happenings on the *Potemkin*.

Strange to say, I slept like a rock that night and didn't awaken until about eight the next morning. The ship was quiet. I hadn't even been disturbed by the men stoning and wetting down the decks. In their new freedom they didn't plan to turn out at five-thirty in the morning and clean ship.

About ten o'clock thirty wild-eyed revolutionists came aboard. What an odd assortment they were, nearly all boys and girls in their teens.

The sailors who were lolling about on the upper decks, started to grumble and threaten them: "Do they think we want their kind to rule us?"

"We fought the battle yesterday and now they come to tell us what we're to do."

"Send them ashore."

"Put them off the ship."

One pretty, but boyish looking girl, climbed to the top of a turret and started to make a speech. "Listen, comrades! We have come together—"

The sailors started to yell and told her to be quiet. A big stoker put one hand over her mouth and with the other swung her down on deck. She fell, but no one seemed to care.

By this time it was evident ashore that the *Potemkin* had mutinied. The crowd on the quay increased. There was cheering and occasionally a red flag appeared, but the Cossacks riding through the mob maintained order.

A collier pulled alongside with coal which we badly needed. It was swarming with workers, nearly three hundred of them. Men and women called to us that they would do the work and let the brave men of the *Potemkin* rest after their victory of the day before. The ship was tied up alongside. Hatches and coal chutes were rigged, but they had no more than started to dump coal on our decks when a cry went up from the collier, "Brothers, it's warm today. How about a drink."

The sailors, enjoying the sight of some one else doing the job they despised, thought a drink was easy pay, so work was stopped and the men and women from the collier were given a hand over the side. They got their drinks and so did our sailors. Soon everyone was drunk and a regular orgy started below decks. There were many fights, you can bet. But we had luck and before the afternoon was over all of the civilians were aboard the collier, and it was sent on its way. We didn't, however, get any coal excepting just enough to blacken the decks.

All day long the carpenters had been hammering together a catafalque for the remains of the sailor Vakulinchuck. In mid-afternoon the body was laid on this crude frame and a large card pinned

to his chest: "He was killed for complaining about bad food."

WHEN in the late afternoon the body was taken ashore and placed on the quay, I could see the mounted Cossacks in their bright uniforms surrounding the catafalque. Their officer was gesticulating violently with our men. The crowd from the city by this time had grown so that the entire waterfront was black with people. Of a sudden the mob could be seen rushing against the band of Cossacks, who slashed down at them with their knouts. The mob went wild. Everyone wanted to see the corpse and to take part in the burial.

Soon a single rifle shot was heard; then a volley. A few of the riders were seen to fall as the crowd ran back wildly for shelter. New troops of Cossacks could be seen riding hard from the upper city, charging in to aid their fellows.

By this time the sun had set, but hell had broken loose ashore. Masses of citizens were parading the streets, carrying torches and banners. First one, then another, and finally every dock around the harbor was put to the torch until they were suddenly transformed to blinding walls of fire. Through it all the Cossacks poured a deadly and deliberate fire into the massed marchers, but as fast as men would drop others filled their places.

Suddenly every light in the city was cut off as the power plant failed, but it was hardly noticeable from where he watched because of the burning buildings. The streets were strewn with dead. No one had time to aid the wounded as the mass swept on its rampage of destruction. Ships tied to docks were burned to the water's edge. Wine shops were broken open and drunkenness was general.

Hundreds of looters were burned to death in one flaming warehouse alone when the troops would not let them escape. The flames ashore clearly etched before us every detail of this orgy of fire and death.

There was no let up until dawn, when a sailor came aboard and said that in the distant parts of the city fighting was still going on. He reported over six thousand killed in the riot of the night before.

That day we thought it best to keep everyone busy. No one was allowed to land, and all hands coaled ship, but after the bunkers were filled no one would pitch in and clean up. The beautiful new *Potemkin* was becoming as filthy as a cattleship.

ALL day long Matushenko had been hatching a little plot. At six in the evening we were ordered to get up steam, weigh anchor, and move a little further out from the city. Without my knowledge he had ordered the six-inch gun loaded and fired at the officer's club. The signalman immediately reported that a white flag had been hoisted ashore, but Matushenko ordered them to fire again. By that time our crew acted and saw to it that no more shells were fired. I found out later that the gunners were firing high over the city and that the signalman had lied about the white flag.

That night was quiet ashore and on board ship. Everyone had had enough. During the early morning hours large numbers of Cossacks had moved quietly in to take complete control of Odessa.

I was just finishing my breakfast the next morning when a messenger dashed down from the signal bridge. "Sir, there are five battleships and a number of destroyers on the horizon, apparently bound for Odessa."

Immediately, orders for full steam were given. The chief boatswain was told to weigh anchor, and the word was passed to secure for sea. We were soon outside the harbor, headed straight for the Russian squadron, the ships of which were stripped for action.

The terrible predicament in which I found myself may well be imagined. Off a few miles at sea were Russian ships, ships of my own nation bearing down on us, with every indication that they meant our destruction. But there I was on the *Potemkin,* and it too was Russian, manned by Russian sailors, for the greater part still loyal to the Czar.

Matushenko, however, soon relieved me of the necessity of making any decision. "Alekseef, you can stay on the bridge, but the chief boatswain'll handle the ship and do as I order. I don't trust you for this job. Bugler, sound "*Battle Stations!*"

The squadron was approaching us close at hand when the wireless operator dashed up to the bridge and handed me a message. "From the admiral, sir," he said.

Matushenko tore the piece of paper from my hands and read "Mad sailors, what do you want? Explain."

"The dirty gorilla," he bellowed, "thinks we're mad, does he? Well, we'll send him this message: 'The sailors of the *Potemkin* cannot make an immediate decision, but would be delighted if the admiral would come aboard for a conference'.

"I only hope he's mad enough to do it. We'll throw his carcass and all of his staff overboard."

The squadron never slowed down or altered course. The five battleships were steaming abreast at full speed like five people walking along a sidewalk together. On one wing there was the flagship *Rostislav,* then the *Three Saints,* the *Georgi,* the *Synop,* and the *Twelve Apostles.* They looked trim and lean as they cut through the water in perfect formation.

Matushenko stepped to the voice pipes and ordered, "Forward turret take the *Three Saints.* After turret take the *Rostislav.* The broadside guns aim at the other ships. Hold until they open fire and then blow 'em to hell."

BUT real drama was developing on the sea. The *Rostislav* was now uncomfortably close and heading directly at us. I looked at Matushenko, expecting the order for a little right or left rudder as the distance between the two ships narrowed. I watched him closely as he stood there gripping the rail, oblivious to everything else in the world. An unholy glint shown in his eyes. A malignant smile played about his mouth as the two ships rushed down on one another. From our bridge we saw the flagship's two masts in direct line. God, what a crash it would be!

"We must change course, Matushenko," the chief boatswain whined. "Please, Ensign Alekseef, give me the order. We haven't much time left. Both ships will be smashed to pieces. It means a thousand lives anyway—"

"Shut up, you cowardly worm," cried Matushenko, without taking his eyes from the bridge of the *Rostislav.* "We'll go right through them."

By this time we were so close that we could see the admiral's staff clamoring at him on the bridge of the ship ahead of us. Some of the officers and men were even rushing aft to avoid being caught in the collision, when, almost imperceptibly, the two masts of the flagship disengaged themselves as she wheeled off her course. A sharp angle showed in her wake astern as she was given hard over rudder. We tore past, missing her by inches, and steamed down the center of her wake.

"I knew he would!" shrieked Matushenko. "I knew he would! I'm a better man than the admiral ever was. Ha, ha! The coward couldn't bluff me. He had to turn, and not the *Potemkin.*"

This test of nerve had drawn many of the men from each ship up on deck, and as we steamed down through the middle of the squadron a great cheer went up for us from the men on the *Georgi* and the *Three Saints.*

While I never could admire a rat like Matushenko, I couldn't help but admire what he had just done. I must admit I felt like cheering myself. Yet I am sure that it was only his insatiable desire for the kill that made him withhold the order to change course.

The squadron kept on until it was almost in the harbor of Odessa, when it suddenly turned and retraced its course. Once more the wireless orderly appeared with a message from the admiral: "The Czar and the Russian nation call on the mutinous crew of the *Potemkin* to surrender and deliver their leaders into the hands of the law."

Contemptuously Matushenko ordered, "Send the flagship a message to drop anchor. Why should I take orders from the admiral now?"

It was but a few minutes until the *Potemkin* was again running down on the squadron, only this time we headed for the open space between the *Georgi* and the *Synop*. The *Twelve Apostles* seemed to be losing speed as the other four ships pulled away from her. When she was clear of the stern of the *Synop* she made a sharp turn to port.

Look out for the *Twelve Apostles*," sang out a quartermaster. "She's going to ram us amidship."

She was picking up speed now and was so close that it was ghastly. We didn't have a chance. Her bow would cut our ship in half like a knife. On and on we rushed to disaster when for no apparent reason the *Twelve Apostles* suddenly started to lose headway and shook so violently that it seemed as though her masts must crash down on her deck. Astern there was a terrible rumpus in the water.

"Her engines are in reverse," called the quartermaster.

It's easier to put headway on a ship than to take it off and although her engines churned madly she still slid forward in the water. But slower and slower she advanced until we finally went past her with our stern not ten feet away from her bow.

WE HAD no sooner cleared the *Twelve Apostles* than we noticed the *Georgi* dropping behind the rest of her consorts. Perhaps as many as two hundred of her sailors were on topside, cheering us and waving madly. I saw a rush of men to her bridge. An officer's body was seen to hurtle through the air and strike the water. It never appeared again. Other officers stood on the bridge with their hands raised above their heads.

The news of our reinforcement soon spread through the *Potemkin* and there was a wild cheering as the two ships moved side by side into the harbor of Odessa. The admiral's squadron, lacking one of its number, disappeared over the horizon. Certainly what laurels had been earned that day went to the *Potemkin*.

That night was one of tension and suspense. The *Georgi* and the *Potemkin* lay at anchor in the harbor with their searchlights sweeping back and forth across the harbor entrance against a possible torpedo attack. Wherever they played against the shore they showed squadrons of black-coated Cossack cavalrymen patrolling the city. No civilians were abroad.

The morning, too, brought its problems. We were almost out of food. I was sent with a committee to the *Georgi* to check up on supplies, but we were hardly over her gangplank before we were met with their request for food from the *Potemkin*.

"Provide the needs of your own ship as we have provided ours," we told them.

But we knew the situation was becoming desperate, for the city of Odessa was under control of the army and it meant death for any man we might send ashore.

On the *Georgi* we found a comic opera meeting in progress. This was partly due to honest difference in opinions, but mainly to an over accumulation of liquor in the bellies of the many impromptu orators. Our attempts to bring about order were without success.

"We have our own committee and don't want to be bossed by the *Potemkin*. We will do whatever we want," we were told.

After an hour of argument, marked only by loud talk and disorder, we noticed that the ship was moving forward at a slow speed. Unknown to us some of the loyal members of the crew had the *Georgi* under way.

There followed a cock-eyed scene, with everyone dashing for the bridge. Each wanted to take the ship on the course for which he had argued. The din was terrible.

"Go to Odessa."

"Go to Sevastopol."

"Go to Rumania."

"Go to hell."

"Damn you, let go that wheel."

"Here, Nicholai, help me throw it over to port."

"No, you don't, it goes to starboard."

The ship twisted this way and that, in and around the harbor shipping. Hairbreadth escapes were the order of every minute.

There was one dreadful interval when, as they ran close to the *Potemkin*, it seemed that the drunks might find a common plan.

"Let's smash the *Potemkin*," sang out one.

"Great idea! Ram the *Potemkin*! Hit her in the middle," howled the drunken chorus with glee.

The chief boatswain, who up until now had been standing aside, reached for a belaying pin; looked it over carefully; gave me a wink and waded into the struggling mass about the steering wheel. It was only a minute or so before he stepped over the heap of bodies and took the wheel without interference.

"We'll end this chatter right now," he said. "I'm going to run the ship aground."

Selecting a shallow sandy place in the harbor, he put the *Georgi* gently but firmly on. "That'll hold her all right, sir."

THE *Potemkin's* committee ordered me to take to our boat immediately. We were no sooner clear of the *Georgi* than she broke out the white flag of surrender.

Once back on our own ship we found that Matushenko had already given the orders to put to sea. Odessa was getting too hot for us. Everyone sensed that the honeymoon of the mutiny was over. The triumph over the squadron the day before had soured. Then there had been hope that the entire fleet would join us. Today we knew better.

That night a council was called in my cabin to determine what we should do. I was pleased to see that several new men had been added to the committee, for I knew them to be loyal to the navy. I opened the discussion, because I had an axe of my own to grind.

"I have always been a friend of the men on this ship," I began, "yet today while I was on the *Georgi* someone stole all my money, nearly two thousand rubles. I can't stand a thieving crew or a filthy ship like this. You must know that I'm against the mutiny, but in spite of this I've helped you. I can't command this ship any longer."

"But sir," Petty Officer Gard replied, "if you go ashore, all the loyal men'll have to go with you and then the ship'll be left in the hands of the mutineers. If we leave the ship they'll bombard the Russian sea coast cities. All of us must stick with the ship."

"I'm willing to take the ship to a Rumanian harbor," I compromised, "and once there we'll surrender to the authorities."

They accepted my decision and then spent hours talking about what flag we should fly entering the Rumanian harbor. These seemingly endless discussions served one good purpose. They gave me the first chance since the mutiny to talk with the leaders among the loyal men. They wanted to start a counter mutiny that night, but I forbade it. I wanted to avoid open conflict, if possible, because I knew in time we were sure to regain the ship.

Late in the afternoon, as we approached Constantza, we were ordered to anchor outside the harbor. Rumanian officers came aboard and we asked them for food.

"Just make a list of what you want," they said, "and we'll take it up with the cabinet. Of course, that will take some days."

The next morning we sent a launch ashore for provisions, but it was fired on by the forts at the harbor entrance. When the boat returned and we were told of what had happened, we knew that we couldn't expect any help from Rumania unless we surrendered the ship.

ABOARD the *Potemkin* it was as though the hand of doom had been laid on us. The spectre of hunger, the realization of the certain aftermath of this orgy, of murder and folly was being borne home to everyone. For once there was little talk in the groups that lay about the decks.

Against the warnings of the engineering committeemen, the order was given to put out to sea. It was protested that the coal was getting dangerously low. But we had to have food, and we couldn't get it at Constantza.

As we steamed from the harbor a signal was sent to the Rumanian patrol boat: "We can last a few days more

and then we will go to Turkey, where they will treat starving people with more kindness. They will give us provisions."

Late that night we altered the course that we had taken toward Turkey and headed instead for the Russian port of Theodosia. We dropped anchor there shortly after sunrise, but none too soon for the fat little major who came aboard as soon as the gangway was lowered. Wringing his hands in despair, he stood before us. "Please, please don't bombard our city. Our people will feed you, but don't fire on us. We've done nothing to you." Tears rolled down his face because of his deep fear for his people.

This made a marked impression on the sailors who were gathered about. "What kind of men have we become? What do they think we are, dragons? Do they think that all of us are murderers?"

The murmur grew until one of the men stepped forward and said, "Sir, we never intended to bombard your city. You can trust us."

Matushenko pushed him back violently into the crowd.

"Out of the way," he ordered. "Now, Mr. Mayor, we want two things from you. We want food and coal. We want them quick or we'll open fire."

In the early morning light I saw that the roads leading back into the hills from the city were black with refugees, fleeing from the death that they feared from their brothers on the *Potemkin*.

Very soon the provisions arrived, but only enough for one meal. It takes a lot of food to fed seven hundred hungry men. Word was sent to us that if we wanted coal we must get it ourselves. There were three schooners of coal in the harbor that we might have if we towed them alongside with our own launches. Matushenko was furious at this and cursed and swore at the mayor's messenger.

Late in the morning Matushenko ordered the steam launch to come alongside. He knew that if we were to get coal, he must go after it. With him went the boat's crew and six extra men. I watched them through my binoculars as they pulled alongside the first of the schooners. I saw Matushenko and five men climb aboard, all carrying rifles. They moved forward cautiously over the coal.

Suddenly a volley was fired at them from some place on the schooner. I saw a sailor clutch at his throat as he pitched face forward in the coal. Three others dropped beside him. When Matushenko tumbled forward and lay still, hope rose in my heart—but no, he was crawling to the launch. Slowly, slowly he made his way with little black clouds spitting up around him as the bullets hit the coal. Finally he reached the rail and dropped into the launch. A number of Cossacks rushed from the deckhouse of the schooner and fired at the retreating boat.

We found when the boat returned to the ship that one of its crew was dead. All the others were wounded except Matushenko. That devil's life must have been charmed. He was not so much as scratched.

Raging like a maniac, he strode up and down the quarterdeck, demanding that the city be destroyed. "Why protect the dirty scum? They told us to go in and get the coal and then planted the soldiers there to kill us." No one interrupted. No one argued with him. It was an accepted fact that he was through as a leader.

WITHOUT a dissenting word from anyone, I ordered the ship to prepare for sea. I announced that we were going to Constantza to surrender the ship to the Rumanian government. I told them further that the mutineers might escape from there and that the loyal men should return to Russia and report to the naval authorities.

We steamed away from Theodosia as though we were going to Batum, but soon after sundown we headed again for Constantza. At two o'clock in the morning we coasted into the harbor past the forts and dropped anchor well in towards the shore. The night was still and the harbor silence was broken only by the metallic sound of our boatswain sledging loose the stopper that held back the anchor chain. With a clank and a rattle it gave way. The anchor splashed

into the water, and a rush of chain followed it. The cruise of the hell ship had ended.

As the sailors were taken ashore to freedom, I made a tour of inspection with the Rumanian admiral. The provision compartments were empty and there were only ten tons of coal in the bunkers.

Glass was broken everywhere. The filth was beyond description. Everything that could be moved had been stolen.

From time to time we passed dried pools of blood, evidence of the horrors that had proceeded our wild cruise of eleven days. Matushenko accompanied us, and as we would come upon one of these ghastly reminders, he spoke with pride, telling the gruesome details of each killing. Finally in disgust the Rumanian admiral ordered him sent ashore immediately and alone.

I can't say that I left the *Potemkin* with regret. The past few days had been a grim experience. I had commanded a mutinous ship while it had refused to obey the orders of the admiral, and while it had flaunted contempt at the force of his entire squadron. I had stood by during that night of hell at Odessa when thousands were being slaughtered and while millions in property were being destroyed. My ship had even bombarded a denfenseless city and had finally surrendered to a foreign power. The outlook certainly wasn't bright for me.

The next day the Russian squadron arrived to take over the *Potemkin*. As soon as the flagship dropped anchor, I reported aboard and surrendered. I faced court-martial for mutiny, with death as the penalty, but there is no use going into that. It was a long, heart-breaking fight against suspicion and prejudice. As you see, though, in the long run, I won out. But I lost too.

What happened to Matushenko? Why, he went to the United States and worked for the Singer Sewing Machine Company in New York City. For two years he attempted to foment revolution and anarchy there until he was finally tipped off by the police to move along.

He next bobbed up in Paris, where he tried one morning to start an uprising single-handed. Some of his friends aided his escape from the French police, but they considered him too dangerous for their delicate plans of world revolution. They sent him on an errand over the border into Russia, where he was immediately arrested. It was hardly a coincidence that the secret police were waiting for him. He was tried and hung for his share in the *Potemkin* mutiny.

By the way, there's one more point about Matushenko. They are talking about building a memorial to him in Russia. What a memory to perpetuate! But perhaps I am prejudiced. He stole my two thousand rubles.

He found himself against a wall too high to vault.

UNDER CONTRACT

By GEORGES SURDEZ

YOU would like to know what was done with the Germans, Austrians, Bulgarians and Turks who happened to be in the French Foreign Legion when the World War started? Nobody could tell you better than I, because my name is Beylen, I am a German and once I was a sergeant in the Prussian service. I enlisted in the summer of 1913, for reasons of my own, so that I counted only one year of service when the armies were mobilized.

Of course, Legionnaires belonging to the allied nations and to neutral countries immediately wanted to go to Europe to fight. They formed the cores of the various field units that fought on the Western Front, at the Dardanelles and in the Salonika sector. Naturally, those who had acquired French citizenship went with them.

And the rest of us helped hold North Africa for France. That was correct, according to our signed agreement. We had no kick coming, because no one had asked us to enlist for five years, and we had made no stipulation as to what we would do in case of War. You may call us traitors, renegades, and you will be wrong. Because you cannot judge a Legionnaire like an ordinary man. His very presence in the corps indicates that he is different.

And then again, talk is easy: The seas were closed, there was no way of getting back. To join the natives that

we had been fighting seemed somehow more treasonable than anything else, for most of us. I don't say that we were faithful to France. But we respected our officers and stood by the Legion. There were some desertions, of course, and a few of the most hot-headed chose the concentration camps. But the most of us made the best of an awkward situation, obeyed orders.

Sure, there were some clashes among us. But our own chiefs understood and managed us as we wished to be. Occasionally, there would be trouble, bickering, when an officer fresh from France came down. That was the case between Captain Castagne and Sergeant Hebermal.

Never heard of Hebermal? Well—

We were sergeants together in a march company campaigning in the Middle Atlas when Castagne reported as our new lieutenant. That was in 1917. He was a tall, raw-boned man of about thirty, with a swarthy face and very black hair. There were grooves down his cheeks, as if he had suffered a great deal, and he had a big beak of a nose. He looked like a fine soldier.

We had heard all about him days before he came, because that kind of information drifts about very fast. We knew that he had started the war as a sergeant, had been commissioned for bravery. He had been wounded twice, and he had a lot of decorations, about all there were to get for a line officer. Some months before, late in the summer of 1916, he had been taken prisoner by the Germans, on the Western Front. He had got away on his second try, through Switzerland, and that was why we had him.

During his successful escape, he had killed a sentry, so that if he were captured again, which was possible, he might have been called a murderer and shot at once. So he had been sent to Africa, to avoid all risk of this happening.

He was a typical Frenchman, which means that he had not knocked about outside of France much before the war. And, although someone should have warned him when he arrived he did not know anything about the Legion, believed it to be composed of Poles, Italians and Spaniards. He had little, deep-set, steel blue eyes that drilled right into you, and you should have seen them the first time he listened to the roll-call.

"Ackermann . . . Becker . . . Schoeuter . . . Schwob . . . Stein . . . Weisgerber. . ."

I was a sergeant already, in the liaison group, and I heard him grumble to the senior-sergeant, who chanced to be one of the few Corsicans with us then: "A pack of Boches!"

EVEN now, that word Boche is not in general use in the Legion. And our own officers, who knew us, were careful about it. But he spoke the truth—we were a pack of Boches, for all our capotes and képis. And, without any exception, all former members of the Kaiser's army.

And there was Castagne commanding more than one hundred Boches—Castagne, who hated Germans as they were hated then. He had better motives than most, I will admit. One of his brothers had been killed, another maimed for life, a third was fighting somewhere on the Somme, with a Chasseur battalion, which did not lead to a long life. His father, mayor of a small village in Champagne, had been executed without trial in 1914, in reprisal for shots fired upon a cavalry patrol from one of the farmhouses. His old mother, his wife and two kids were on the German side of the lines. Maybe it was not good sense to hold us responsible, but those were not sensible days.

Oh, Castagne was a man, and remained polite enough in words. But he could not help it if his glance, bouncing from man to man, felt like a slap across the mug. Possibly he did not stop to think of how he might have felt if forced to wear a German uniform and to fight against his own side. You could tell that all he could think of was that he had seen pans like ours under bucket-helmets in the trenches of France.

He took a particular dislike to my friend Hebermal, who was a sergeant. Hebermal was quite a big fellow, as tall as Castagne but much heavier. He had

one of those lean, long, sardonic Prussian faces, and his shoulders, his big, tanned neck, everything, showed that he had served in our army a long time.

He had signed for the Legion, and he was honoring his signature. But he hated the French, and France. Bringing him and Castagne together was like striking flint on steel. You could see the sparks.

WHEN their eyes first met, hatred flared, as strong and fresh as if it had existed for years. They were natural enemies, like a cat and a dog. Hebermal acknowledged the introduction with a salute, which Castagne returned. But you could see that they had fallen on guard, that a duel was starting.

It was Lieutenant Castagne who made the first move. He had watched Hebermal silently for several days, noticed his pride in his efficiency. And when he slipped up on some trifling detail job around one of our camps, Castagne summoned him. It was a beautiful job of the sort, a cold, cutting bawling-out. He ended with:

"The Germans were wise to get rid of you!" And the moment he had spoken, you could see that he realized that he had been unfair. But he was stubborn, and struck again to show how little he cared: "What a valuable man they lost!"

Did you ever see a man sneer without lifting a muscle of his face? On the surface, Hebermal's expression did not change. But it was as if the light inside had changed.

"We'll soon see, *mon lieutenant,*" he replied.

"What do you mean?"

"I signed up for five years in 1912, Lieutenant. My contract is almost over."

"You'll desert?"

"A time-expired man does not desert, Lieutenant. He leaves."

"He leaves for a concentration camp, Sergeant."

"We'll see, Lieutenant."

Castagne prodded and prodded, trying to make Hebermal say something rebellious.

But before he could succeed, the captain arrived on the run and broke up the conversation. Somebody must have tipped him off as to what was going on. He dismissed the sergeants, asked Castagne to follow him into his tent.

That captain was a good Frenchman, remember, but he had been in the Legion fifteen years, and was very fond of Hebermal. When Castagne emerged, he was red to the ears, quivering. He must have got an unholy rating inside.

Our captain was not given to making long speeches, but the next time we had a job to do, he stood before us, his big belly pushing against his belt-buckle, his face scarlet, his thick legs propped wide apart. He looked at us for a few seconds, cleared his throat, and said:

"Men wearing the Legion's uniform are Legionnaires, that's all. And a Legionnaire is the best damn soldier in the whole world. The fellows on the other side may wonder who you are, too, and why you are here. You carry your documents of identification at the points of your bayonets. Go show them! Hebermal!"

Hebermal took four steps forward, presented arms. The old man looked at him and nodded unconsciously, as he always nodded when he saw a soldier properly rigged.

"I hear you're getting to be quite an orator. You will take charge of the first section and display your other talents."

We all knew who was intended to be impressed.

"Thank you, *mon capitaine.*"

If you want to know what our company did that day, look up the records under: Combat of Souk-el-Malek.

The Moroccans always fight well. And the gang we were up against had brand new repeating rifles and a lot of ammunition which they were crazy to try out. They had been told, too, that the French were being beaten on the Western Front, and they were mad with hope. See, if they had licked the Legion, hesitating tribes would have risen against France, and perhaps swept the Europeans into the ocean.

We fought for seven hours on the slopes, and after that we had to storm a village with bayonets and grenades.

The natives acted as if they had been doped, because you had to kill them to stop their fighting. We'd think we had got rid of them, and a new bunch would stream from a side street, yelling and shooting.

When it was over, Castagne wiped his face and looked at us.

He was a Frenchman, that was true. But war had made him a soldier and he was fast turning into a professional. He knew what we had done, how good we were. And he knew that a battalion of Zouaves, all French, with many guys who had served in the trenches, had been checked, beaten back on our right. We had had to help them out with a flanking fire from our machine-guns, after we had reached and passed our assigned objectives.

He looked at us, opened his mouth once or twice, could find nothing to say, and shut up. But even if he hated us quite as much as before, he had respect for us. Maybe he was beginning to understand that it was harder to die when your heart was not in it!

As for us, we hated him back. But we liked his work. Even in the Legion, he proved better than a fair officer.

THEY did not give us much rest.

Two days later, we were in another show. The Chleuhs made one of those surprise attacks they specialize in, and were leaping among us before we saw them. Castagne was knocked down by a guy who wrapped both arms around his legs, and another fellow knelt on his chest and tried to slice his neck.

Hebermal saw him drop and ran to him. Big as he was, the sergeant was swift and deft as a cat. He interposed the bayonet between the lieutenant's throat and the blade, knocked out the first guy with a kick under the chin, brained the other with a smash of his gun-butt. I ran up with a couple of other fellows, but all we had to do was finish one of them, who still squirmed.

The sergeant, with a polite smile, helped the officer to his feet. Castagne spat out some grit, dusted the seat of his pants like a man who's tripped on a sidewalk, looked at Hebermal, grinned and offered his hand.

"It seems as if I owed you some sort of thanks, Hebermal," he said.

"Oh, Lieutenant! You owe me nothing." Hebermal pretended not to see the hand stretched out to him: "I'm under contract to do this sort of thing."

That made Castagne feel foolish, because it was as good as telling him that Hebermal had saved him only because it was part of his job, and that if he had been a free agent, that Moroccan could have hacked away as much as he pleased. Castagne hated to be ridiculous, and he knew that this episode made him appear funny.

He had been saved by the man he hated most!

And he accepted Hebermal's words literally. He strove to treat him casually, as if he owed him no gratitude. And perhaps you can imagine how it feels to scold a man who has kept your head and your body together!

WHEN our old captain left us to take a turn of duty on the Western Front—those veteran officers collect campaigns as some kids collect stamps—and Castagne was promoted to replace him, we grew a little nervous. Not for ourselves, because Castagne had learned how to handle matters by that time, and we could not have wished a more considerate chief, but for Hebermal. The old man had served as a buffer between them so long—and he was gone. And, say what you will, when a company commander stalks a mere sergeant, that sergeant will lose out.

Hebermal knew it, and watched himself. He felt that if Castagne had a chance to break him and held off, the accounts would be squared. And, being human, he liked to keep the edge.

Although we were considered as enlisted for the duration of the war officially, the old routine continued, and in due course Castagne received in his mail a communication concerning Hebermal. The sergeant's enlistment was drawing to a close. He had but a few days to serve before being entitled to complete discharge. The new captain sent for him.

"You intend to stay with us, of course?"

"My conscience does not permit me, Captain, to sign now."

"You have a career here, a career of your own choice."

"Circumstances have altered, Captain."

"Unless you renew your enlistment, for the minimum period allowable, I shall have you guarded and sent to the rear."

"At your orders, Captain," Hebermal replied. He did not have to add 'but not for much longer'. His eyes said that.

As he refused to sign on again, in due time he was sent north with empty carts bound for Meknes, under escort. In theory, he was already a prisoner of war, but the fellows in charge probably grew careless, as he wore a French uniform. In any case, the next thing we heard was that he had hopped it for the hills.

No need to ask where he had gone. We knew he had joined the Moors. That was his right, as he had served out his time. And he would find a fairly numerous company, for the number of deserters living among the hostile tribes was on the increase during that period when things looked fairly good for Germany.

And don't think that all of them were Germans, either. I think there were at least as many Frenchmen, guys escaped from punishment camps and the African light infantry.

The majority of those deserters remained out there what they had been always, pretty fair fighters, but men of small merit and without the sense of leadership. Hebermal was an exceptional type for a deserter, one in five or six hundred. He had been well educated, and we knew, although he had never boasted of it, that he had been in the regular army in Prussia, a captain. He was a born chief, and I felt from the first that he would not be content to be a casual hanger-on of a tribe, doing odd jobs repairing arms, fighting only when forced.

Less than a month after he had deserted—or left, if you like—the French learned that they had something a bit new to handle. Hebermal had gathered around him a small band of Europeans, some Germans, others French, which formed a nucleus for a well-drilled, perfectly disciplined formation of picked tribesmen, guys who could shoot straight, crawl around at night without making noise, understand fairly complicated plans of action.

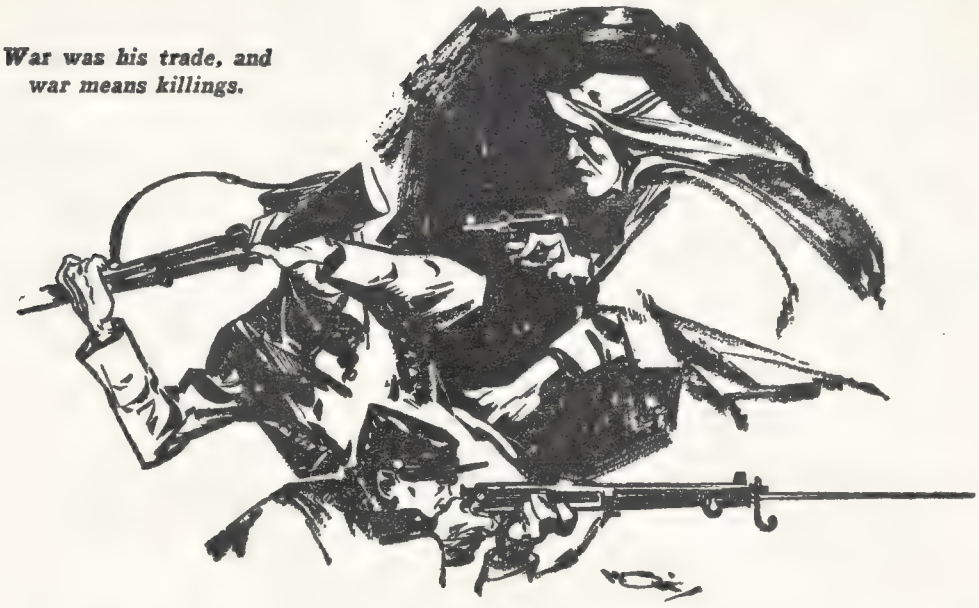
His very first job had the master's touch. He captured six mules loaded with rifle ammunition, the most coveted loot in the hills, plucking them right out of an escorted convoy. If you took a map and drew a diagram of the various moves, it looked like a ballet performance. Shots here to draw attention, a simulated 'real' attack elsewhere, then the raid on the mules in the midst of confusion.

Do not get the idea that Hebermal was a sort of book renegade, knightly and merciful to his former comrades. War was his trade, and war means killings. His private declaration of hostilities against the French Republic was found pinned to the naked breast of a beheaded European sergeant, pinned with the dead man's bayonet.

Many deserters avoided clashing with the Legion, partly because of sentiment, partly because they knew that Legionnaires were tougher to handle than most people. Hebermal did not seek out the Legion, but he never hesitated when necessary. He had a great advantage over us, as he knew all our tricks and traps, had in fact trained our counter-raiders. In addition, the choice of time and terrain invariably was his.

Within two months, he had become a man of mystery, an awing phantom, even to me, who had shared his quarters for months. He was reported everywhere at once. One day he would be seen in a raid on an ammunition party in the hills, the next he would appear before some blockhouse along the narrow gauge tracks near Taza.

Our company was made somehow more nervous than any other. Why? Suppose you knew a murderous maniac roamed at large, you would be worried—but if you knew that maniac was your brother with special motive to seek you out, you would be in terror. He spared our sentries no more than those of other



War was his trade, and war means killings.

units. Men who had been his close pals were knifed, mutilated. How much of this was done with his own hand, how much by the savage fellows he led, he was the only one who really knew.

When his presence was reported near us, our outposts would be doubled. He grew so important that he was mentioned by name in official orders. A court-martial solemnly tried him, sentenced him to death, by default.

Which meant that anywhere, any time that he was caught he could be shot at once, without further ado. But capturing him was growing to be quite a problem. Hebermal was well informed, seemed to know all that went on around us, appeared to have overheard private conversations!

CAPTAIN Castagne was furious at the former sergeant's swift fame. He scoffed at his reputation. He gathered us sergeants for a lecture.

"You non-commissioned officers are partially to blame for the poor morale and nervousness of your men. You do nothing to combat that stupid legend of omnipotence, invincibility; you carelessly contribute to its growth by your yarns at mess. Hell, must I tell you that orderlies have ears? And tongues?

"You have all known the renegade in question, you know he is flesh and blood. He is no more intelligent than you are. You remember that he had his faults as a sergeant. You should remember that anyone of you—"

He was about to conclude: "anyone of you could do the same in his place", but broke off. It was not his job to tempt us to desert and try our luck with the natives. Enough stories of Hebermal's luxurious living, of his harem, seeped to us to make many of us a bit restless and wistful.

"My personal belief is that many exploits are attributed to him wrongly, because we know his name and we like to brand things. I want all this nonsense cut out. He is reported in the region, and I don't want the sentries doubled. That gives him false prestige and gives us a sense of inferiority.

"By the way, although he has no reason to love me, Hebermal has never come within reach of my hands."

That was an unfortunate remark, for which Hebermal took cruel vengeance. At dawn the next morning, Captain Castagne awoke, looked in vain for his boots, his service revolver, his carbine, his field-glasses his decorations.

He went into a rage when someone calmly suggested that Hebermal had

taken the lot, and that he was lucky not to have been murdered in his sleep.

"There it goes! Hebermal, Hebermal!" He swore for thirty seconds straight before resuming. "Giving him a build-up, are you? To do it he would have had to pass through the outposts down the hill, between our sentries up here, parade through the camp, and go out again, carrying the stuff! Spread out, search around—those guns are hidden somewhere close."

"Search where, Captain?"

"Everywhere. Some sneak-thief took advantage of the prevailing funk to get away with a cute trick. Now—"

But a liaison man ran up, handed the captain a slip of paper.

"What's this?"

"Note for you, Captain. Thrown into one of our outposts tied around a stone, just after daybreak, Captain."

Castagne stared at the paper as if it had been a poisonous reptile. Then his trembling fingers took it. His face changed as he read it. And he did something more courageous than anything we had seen in action, he turned the note over to the nearest sergeant, with a rueful grin:

"With all my excuses, gentlemen!"

The note passed from hand to hand.

My dear little Captain:

Always admired your weapons, especially the American carbine. I called for them in person. Your horse is gone, but someone else did the job. He shall be well treated, don't worry—you know I don't fight mounted. Keep this as a receipt to present to the peace commission at the proper time. I can assure you that a victorious Germany will not quibble over payment, because I turned out to be a *very valuable man.* Would have liked to stop and say hello, but you slept so soundly that I feared to disturb you. But don't complain I neglect my former superior, eh? Signed: *Hebermal,* Squadron-commander, German Imperial Army, detached to foreign service.

I don't remember which one of us started to laugh. But soon all of us were bending over, right in front of Castagne. He tried hard to keep his temper, but I am sure that he was sorry that Hebermal had not cut his throat when he had the chance. He laughed with us, at least with his mouth, but his eyes wouldn't join in. That fierce glance above the grin was comical.

"He scores, he scores," he murmured.

For several days, he was silent, acted like a man in a daze. Then he organized a counter-raiding band. Now, night scouting and raiding compose a specialized occupation. You need a natural talent for it and years of practice. Castagne was a very capable officer, as brave as a man could be. But he soon discovered that he was not cut out for those jobs.

Baffled on his own initiative, he hounded the native intelligence for private information, begged to be tipped off when there was a chance to capture Hebermal. The French had a swarm of secret agents among the hostile tribesmen and often knew in advance when something serious was underway. But, sly as a rat, Hebermal ate the cheese and avoided the traps.

One episode became famous throughout the Moroccan Army. Castagne had been informed that Hebermal was reported about to raid a supply of ammunition kept in a small hamlet back of our lines. The tip was good, given by a member of his own gang, who deserted to us and used his knowledge to purchase his life.

The captain rubbed his hands, gathered the company and picked out twenty men. Twenty men and every single one a German.

Castagne no longer worried about their loyalty. They hated Hebermal because they were afraid of him. He did not hesitate to kill Legionnaires or to have them killed. Not one of the lot but would have given six months' pay to sink a bayonet between his ribs.

This time, Castagne was sure of himself. There would be no need to prowl about in the darkness; it would not be hinted that his heavy breathing or the creaking of his leather leggings had warned off the enemy and spoiled the show. He had a plan of the village and told each man just where to go as soon as night fell.

If Hebermal came he was a doomed man.

Castagne had selected a spot for himself, at the foot of a wall near the entrance to the village. The hours dragged by. Day broke, and at last he rose and gave the signal to abandon the undertaking. Naturally, he was stiff from his prolonged, motionless vigil, yawned and stretched. And as he did so, his eyes rested on the wall which he had so carefully hugged all night.

Unbelievable, miraculous, a large inscription sprawled white against the dried mud bricks.

"Cuckoo . . . I see you . . . Hebermal. . . ."

The paint was fresh, as he ascertained with the tips of his fingers. Castagne and the rest of us could not be sure, of course, that some practical joker had not taken advantage of the situation. It seemed impossible for Hebermal to have done the job in person.

But you should have heard the laughing that day! How could we help it, whenever we thought of Castagne stretched out there, his pistol in hand, while some guy was painting a sign in the darkness, not ten feet away?

Whoever had done the painting must have known that the captain's hearing was rather poor on the right side. The thunder of guns at Verdun had affected him permanently. But even allowing for that, the swishing of the brush should have been loud enough—

Castagne earned his nickname of 'Cuckoo' that night. Even sergeants occasionally slipped and referred to him by that term. Some wit made up a little rhyme about it, which was sung at an entertainment. The captain sat there, in the front row, and grinned, grinned. But he was hurt. We thought he would die of pernicious anemia, he grew so thin and worn. His face was all jutting nose and fierce eyes.

No doubt he was tempted to ask a transfer, to go back to France, to the front, anywhere. But he did not wish to concede victory to Hebermal so soon, would not retreat under pressure.

"I'll get my hands on him yet," he stated at mess.

And he was laughed at. Before long, he was considered a bit mad on the subject.

IT was almost a year after Hebermal had left us that we were sent into a pretty serious attack on a native village. Our company had not suffered much from his raids in the past few months, and his name was almost forgotten. Some people claimed that he had been killed, others said that he was now a sort of adviser to the native leaders, and not permitted to risk his life in action.

The fighting was almost over. We were searching the houses one by one, using the bayonet or a couple of grenades whenever needed. You have to do that before carrying on, if you don't want slobs to pop out and shoot you from behind.

We reached the central place, an oblong surrounded by houses, with Captain Castagne in the lead.

Suddenly, a big guy in a brown cloak darted out from somewhere and tried to get clear.

"Don't shoot," the captain screamed. "It's Hebermal, Hebermal!"

And with that he forgot that we had not completely cleaned out the place, threw caution to the winds and ran like a mad man. We followed him, panting like excited dogs. It was funny, when you think of it. We climbed over dividing walls, crashed into houses, and paid no attention whatever to other survivors we happened to find, unless they showed fight.

We were too busy, we wanted Hebermal.

Castagne cornered him in a courtyard, when the fellow found himself against a wall too high to vault. Feeling that he was about to be caught, Hebermal whirled on us, flourished an automatic. But he had no time to press the trigger.

Castagne was too ardent to think of using a weapon. He leaped into the air, butted Hebermal right in the stomach, like an Apache in a brothel brawl.

Castagne kicked the gun out of the other man's hand, and was standing above him, half-laughing, half-crying.

"Eh, eh, old chap! Here we are, eh? Small world, isn't it? Eh, old chap, eh!"

He was nearly hysterical, and I swear he giggled like a woman.

We helped the guy to stand. He wore

a beard eight inches long; he was thin as a stork, as dark as a Moroccan. Despite what the captain had said, we were not so sure he was Hebermal, until he spoke.

"Got a smoke, anybody?"

He got the cigarette. Then he explained that he had not been able to run very fast, because he had an old wound in his thigh. That was what had kept him from being so active in the past months. There was no good surgeon in the hills, and the hole was festering.

"I'll probably lose that leg," he concluded calmly.

"I don't think so," Castagne told him.

Hebermal looked at him, understood the hint and started to laugh, softly, easily, as if it were really very comical.

"That's right, Castagne. I was forgetting!"

"Captain to you," Castagne snapped him up. "We never herded cows together, that you are privileged to call me by my name."

We all expected Hébermal to have a comeback for that one, because he had nothing to lose. What could be done to him when he was sure to be shot anyway? But he looked at Castagne —we could not be sure whether with respect or pity—and corrected himself:

"Sorry, Captain."

"No offense," Castagne said, mechanically. "Let's go."

IT was decided that Hebermal would be executed at dawn the next day, and that a native infantry unit would supply the firing-squad. But as the Legion had captured him, the Legion guarded him. We did not wish him to escape. I drew the job of sleeping in the tent with him, which was right, as we had been such close friends and they thought he might like to speak to someone he knew.

I expected him to talk all night.

But he just told me that if the Moroccans had been organized, supplied with ammunition, machine-guns and a few field pieces, they would have driven the French into the Atlantic long since.

He ate a big dish of stew, took a couple of stiff drinks, smoked a while, and turned in! He slept all night, like a baby, while I sat by and did his worrying.

A little while before daybreak, I stepped out of the tent for a breath of air. I saw that there was some excitement, and soon a passing liaison guy gave me the news: The Germans had tried to shove through near Soissons, and Foch had caught them on the move. Four or five hundred tanks tearing through their flank. The officers were saying that the war was over, save for a year or so of mopping up.

A lot of us in the Legion felt sad that day. You can change your allegiance and your passport, but if something didn't survive deep inside you wouldn't be a man but a dog. And think of the good jobs some of us would have got if Germany had won and taken over Morocco, what with knowing the languages and the people! Or maybe we'd have been hunted down and shot for treason.

I was about to go inside and tell Hebermal, when Captain Castagne appeared. He was pretty happy, of course. But he grabbed my arm and said: "You have heard the news, Beylen? It won't be read until after the execution parade." He rubbed his nose in embarrassment: "So there is no need to inform him before."

I was surprised and almost showed it. That was the first time I understood how close Castagne and Hebermal were to liking each other. Because a certain kind of consideration and esteem, from one professional soldier to another, is very close to liking.

A squad of *Tirailleurs,* commanded by a French adjutant, marched up. They were coming for the prisoner. Troops were assembling, to witness the ceremonies.

Castagne nodded to me and we went into the tent. Hebermal sat up on his blankets and yawned: "Hello, Captain —hello there, Beylen." He stood up, brushed his clothes and rewound his turban. I handed him a tin cup filled with rum, which he drank.

"What's the war news?" he asked Castagne.

"Nothing startling," Castagne replied,

briefly. He was a poor liar, and grew red: "Never mind that. I don't forget that I was your commanding officer and I considered you a fine soldier. Is there anything I can do for you?"

Hebermal laughed. He handed the captain two crumpled papers.

"Oh, yes! You can dismiss that firing-squad, Captain. My execution would be illegal according to precedents—"

"You've been sentenced by a court-martial," Castagne said.

"Unjustly. Look at those—you read a little German, if I remember rightly?" And while Castagne read, Hebermal explained: "You will find that one is the notice that my enlistment in the Foreign Legion had expired, stamped by Headquarters at Bel-Abbès, countersigned at the regimental depot in Meknes. That proves I am not a deserter, one of the charges made against me.

"The other, as you will note, is a letter from the war ministry in Berlin, reinstating me in my former rank and detaching me to service with our Moroccan allies. If you compare the dates, you will discover that my first act of war against France was performed after the issue of the commission. The clothing I wear can be said to constitute the uniform of the people I served with, at my Emperor's orders. I am in no sense a spy, and I am not a deserter. Acting as I was under orders from my chiefs, all in the line of military operations, those silly charges of murder fall of themselves."

"How did you get these—hide them?" Castagne asked.

"You do not expect me to give you such information while the hostilities continue, do you, Captain?" Hebermal struck a match, lighted a cigarette: "You can execute me, of course. But I shall derive some consolation from knowing I was murdered."

CASTAGNE'S jaws sagged. I could see that Hebermal was winning the final trick. Naturally, I figured out easily enough how he had obtained those papers. The discharge had been turned over to one of his agents by a bribed clerk. The commission had come through Holland, Spain and the Riff. Hebermal had probably concealed both stitched between the folds of his *burnous*.

The captain shrugged: "Execution of the sentence will be suspended, these documents presented to the proper authorities." He looked at Hebermal with an odd expression of disdain on his face: "All right, you have had yourself covered. You'll probably be pardoned, and you'll be shipped home inside a year. There is war news today—"

Hebermal grinned, nodded.

"The drive failed. We have wireless communications in the hills, you know! I was advised of what you've heard this morning at eleven o'clock yesterday morning."

Captain Castagne grew red once more.

"You'll understand why I withheld the facts, I hope. With this change in plans, there is another matter to take up: Two of your men were taken during the night—Vallodon, a Frenchman, and Heimos, both sentenced by default. They asked if they would have a chance to shake hands with you before dying. I promised them they would."

For the first time, I saw Habermal lose his calm.

"Where were they captured? My instructions to them—"

"They've told me. You told them things would grow very unhealthy for them in the hills and to dodge out at the first opportunity. They had arranged to make a try for the Spanish Riff, in disguise, when they heard you were taken. Seems there were seven of them who decided to try a rescue—"

"A rescue from this camp?" Hebermal's face lighted up: "The presumptuous fools—seven against ten thousand!"

"Oh, you train your chaps well. It was an accident that they were spotted coming through our outposts. They fought. Five were killed, those two overpowered. They wanted you to know they hadn't quit, that they'd tried." Castagne nodded in approval. "I promised they'd see you. May I ask you to speak to them? There is no hope for *them*. Plain deserters, without commissions."

Hebermal stood silent for some time. I saw the perspiration seep on his brow,

slide down his thin cheeks. I did not envy him the task ahead of him, bidding those friends farewell, leaving them to die for having sought to save him.

He was still thinking when the tent flap lifted, and the adjutant of *Tirailleurs* stuck his head inside. "Beg pardon, Captain, but everything is in readiness. I have the receipt for the prisoner right here for you—"

Castagne was about to speak, when Hebermal interrupted him.

"In a minute, adjutant!" And when the flap dropped, he addressed the captain: "I have asked few favors in my life. But will you return those papers to me, forget them?"

He took the two letters, rolled them together, and Castagne held his lighter out. As the paper burned, they looked at each other and smiled.

"There are things a man can't do, Captain."

"I know, *mon commandant,*" Castagne replied quietly.

Hebermal saluted him, shook hands with me, and he was turned over to the adjutant, who gave me a signed receipt. I could follow the progress of the detachment through the camp by the roll of the drums, muffled, sinister. And I followed, as if fascinated.

THE other two were there already, standing before the troops, the firing-squads making little bright knots of men nearer to them, with the panorama of the hills beyond. I had known Heimos when he had been in the Legion. He was a big guy who walked like a farmer when out of the ranks. Not a very bright lad. Vallodon was a little shrimp, who couldn't have weighed more than a hundred and ten pounds. He was from Paris, had escaped from a prison camp.

They looked pretty lonely out there, before all those people, living their last minutes. And when they smiled as Hebermal appeared, I understood why he was doing this. No man could have gone to bid them good-by and walked away alive. They'd have broken, right there before thousands of men.

Hebermal's hands were tied, like theirs, so there was no shaking of hands. But he looked at them, grinned and nodded.

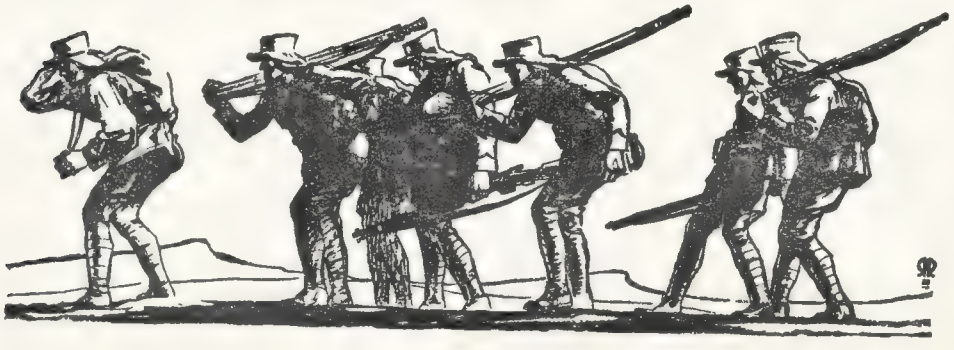
And you should have seen those two. They worshipped him, were glad to die for him. They had no idea what their deaths would cost him!

Hebermal took the end of the row. The others looked at him, to see how to behave. They had needed him, all right! They knew that whatever he did would be proper. For he was their chief. When he shook his head, refusing the blindfold, they shook their heads. Then they looked at the muzzles of the guns and waited.

Not for long. . . .

A gleaming sword curved through the sunlight, a volley cracked out. Then, four or five seconds apart, three pistol shots, the shots of mercy.

Castagne, standing not far from me, blew his nose hard. Then he turned away, with an odd gesture. Helplessness, admiration? Not pleasure, in any case, although he was a Frenchman, as French as you could find. . . .



The ship sped on and left them.

OLD GUS HEADS FOR SHORE

By BERT SHURTLEFF

AN oilskin-shrouded figure staggered clumsily down the forecastle ladder of the little schooner and paused to shake a sleeping form in one of the bunks. Then the great hand went to another huddle of blankets as the first stirred to wakefulness.

"I guess it's no use tryin' to rout out ol' Sharlie," grinned the sleepy little caricature that had responded to the first shake. "He mus' be sleepin' off a good von. Skipper bring he aboart."

"De Ol' Man say he got to stan' watch wit' you, Garge," growled the burly one, shaking until the whole contents of the bunk vibrated. "He stan' for no sojerin' aboart dis schooner. Efery man stan' his trick, drunk or sober, turn und turn about, if ve got to roun' him to vit' a bucket o' col' vater."

The blankets began to heave and toss and moan. A face very like that of a worried old walrus suddenly appeared, the eyes batting hard in the dim glow of the forecastle lamp in spite of the ample shade the heavy brows afforded them. The handle bar mustache seemed to jerk angrily, like the twitching tail of an aroused cat.

"You got de nex' vatch, Sharlie," explained the big man, his voice a low growl that would mingle with the noises of the ship and not disturb the other forms in the neighboring bunks.

"Dis ain' no Sharlie," snorted the disturbed one disgustedly, rolling over to face the hull. "Dis is Goos. Go vake dat Sharlie und leave me be. I vant to sleep."

Garge had crawled from his bunk and had started to reach for his trousers. He halted at the sound of that unfamiliar voice issuing from his dory mate's berth and turned an incredulous gargoyle of a face from the hunched figure to the giant who had tried to arouse it.

In his fishing clothes Garge looked like a penguin that has forgotten to dress for dinner, but he was not dressed now. His odd little form was encased in one of the world's last suits of long red woolen underwear, which bunched in great folds around his middle and hung over in great wrinkles at wrist and ankle.

Above that flame, sad eyes peered questioningly from under drooping brows. An even sadder mustache fell away to drooping shoulders which seemed to stretch down incredibly to end in odd little flippers that passed as arms. These in turn stretched below the droop of surplus underwear seat to where the oddest little bowed duck legs that ever supported a human frame terminated in great splayed feet now encased in two pairs of well darned voluminous woolen socks.

"Dat ain' Lunenberg Sharlie, for a fac'," he whispered, awed at the discovery.

"Whoefer he is, he got to stan' Sharlie's vatch," insisted the other, resorting to more shaking. "Roll out, you, whoefer you be, und come af'. De Ol' Man say I fin' Lunenberg Sharlie in de bunk vhere he chuck him, so I bring back whoefer tryin' to ship aboart we as dat champeen of de fleet."

The shaken one moaned again, then sniffed audibly. With a sudden heave he sat up, bumping his head on the sagged bunk above him and bringing a startled grunt from the sleeper there. Piercing old eyes burned now above those high cheek bones.

"Dis is a fishin' boat," he moaned, staring from one to the other. "You shanghai Goos on a Banks trawler, you low-down fisherman scum. You can' do dat to ol' Goos. He nefer sail in no stinkin' codfish boat so long as he liff."

"What's all this talk of shanghaiin'?" roared a deep voice at the scuttle above them. "Where's that drunken sot of a Charlie? Get him up here to take the wheel. Nobody wants to stand more than his trick with drunken lubbers below."

Gus heaved from the bunk, his spare old form fully dressed, and shook a bony fist up at the dark face that caught only the faintest rays of the feeble swinging light.

"Dis ain' no Sharlie from Lunenberg nor vhereefer," he called testily. "Dis is ol' Goos, de sailor. You got no rights to shanghai me aboart your stinkin' fishin' boat. I von't vork her. You got to put me ashore."

THE grin disappeared from the face above and the big skipper heaved his ponderous body down toward them. Turning when he reached their level, he stared at the belligerent face and then put out a great paw to turn him fully to the light. Scowling, he looked back at the recently vacated bunk, then up at the ancient mackinaw hanging beside it and the woolen toque on the peg.

"Ain't them Charlie's duds?" he asked Garge, his face a picture of wonder and disappointment.

Garge shuffled toward the swaying garment and thrust one of his flippers into a pocket, drawing forth a stub of pipe that set him to nodding knowingly.

"Dat's Sharlie's bes' pipe, so she mus' be his shore duds," he declared, staring accusingly at the blinking Gus. Then his head thrust forward, his body twitched oddly, and his fists doubled as he moved back toward the old sailor.

"You done for my dory mate, you Swede hoodlum," he fairly hissed, starting to swing one of his little flippers in an odd circle as he advanced with what was evidently dire threat in his nar-

rowed eyes. "I show you what it mean to do in de bes' fisherman in de whole fleet. I cut you open like I split a cod."

"Avast," grunted the captain, shoving back his sou'wester and scratching the thinning hair above his temples. "I guess some mistake has been made. Somehow we got this feller instead of Charlie, but—" still scratching and studying Gus's evident disapproval of them and of their heavily scented little schooner—"I guess dis feller ain't to blame. I think I see it all now."

"Den you see more dan me," sighed Garge, sitting down dazedly and shaking his head.

"Or me eider," grunted Gus. Then his old face lighted eagerly. "You see so much, I vunder do you see de vay to set me ashore."

The skipper gave him a disapproving look and went on to explain.

"I goes ashore to drag back Charlie when it's time to sail and a bunch off the *Mary B.* points him out to me, so dead drunk I got to lug him back aboard and roll him into his bunk. I never look twice, seein' that old mug with the mop down the front of it and bein' too mad to do anything but get him and get out of there.

"Them low-down cusses off the *Mary B* must of put up a job on me. They been wantin' old Charlie for years because he's top dory man of the fleet. They get this sailor drunk, switch jackets and caps on him, and make me take him for Lunenberg. I see it all now."

He moaned and sat down heavily beside the tiny drooping figure of Garge. The little man sniffled and seemed about to burst into tears. Then the flippers clenched again and his drooping shoulders lifted.

"We head back to Boston and snaggle him off de *Mary B,*" he suggested fiercely, sticking out his lips until his drooping mustache bristled.

"Und set me ashore," urged Gus hopefully.

Captain Bartlett shook his big head sadly.

"No, boys, we got to go through with it this trip. We can't put about on such an errand. The *Mary B'd* be headin' out before we'd get there. We got to go right ahead about our fishin' and get even with them Halifax scuts the next time we meets up with 'em."

"You got to set me ashore," insisted the old sailor doggedly.

The captain turned toward him, angered by the loss of his prize dory man and by the sailor's scorn of fishing and all connected with the calling.

"If you're a sailor you know we can't do that," he snapped. "You're here and you stay here until the trip's over."

"I von't vork," said Gus sullenly.

"You work or you don't eat. We carry no useless stuff aboard this schooner."

Gus met that glower with an equal stare of hate out of eyes red from a prolonged debauch. Then, facing the inevitable, he hedged.

"I vork if you set me aboart de firs' boat ve sight vhat goin' back ashore."

Captain Bartlett snorted.

"You work and like it, and no promises made."

"I von't stay aboart your stinkin' schooner," Gus called after that swaying bulk mounting the steps. "I leaf you de firs' chance I get."

"Go ahead," the skipper called tauntingly. "Swim off any time, or go below and walk ashore. Bottom's only a little better'n half a mile down."

Gus sat down heavily, his knees shaking with anger and humiliation at his plight. Out of sullen red eyes he watched the fumbling Garge pull on trousers that had to be turned up half a fathom at the bottom of each leg before boots were squeezed over them. Then the odd flippers and sad face struggled into two heavy woolen shirts, a thick sweater, a vest, two jackets, and oilskins.

"Dem's Sharlie's t'ings," grunted the little dory mate, jerking his receding chin from the folds of the turtleneck sweater enough to indicate a sea bag in a corner. "You might as vell crawl into dem, you useless greenhorn. Ve got to try to make a cod killer out of you, efen if you don' like it."

Gus looked from the indicated oilskins and boots to the scornful little penguin of a man. Suddenly his bitterness left him and his old shoulders began

to shake. The mustache jiggled, the face wrinkled, and a mighty chuckle heaved up from the depths of his spare ribs.

"You don' like me und I don' like you, Garge," he cackled. "Ve make a fine pair of dory mates. I hate you und de oder fish yoost as much as you hate me. Ve see vhich vun vin."

Garge peered at him from under the brim of his sou'wester as he folded in the ends of his mustache and reached to fasten the chin-strap, careful to tuck the flannel lined flaps over his huge stand-off ears as he adjusted the stiff hat.

"Vin?" he demanded, thrusting his face forward and trying his best to pop out his eyes threateningly.

"Yah, you vant to fill de ship vid stinkin' fish. Goos vant to git ashore. I bet you a qvart of good rum I get ashore before your skipper got all de fish he vant."

Garge snorted his disdain. Knowing Captain Bartlett from having sailed for years aboard the *Gertie May*, he considered the bet as good as won.

"I take you up on dat, Greenie," he chuckled. "Us kill fish under Cap'n Bartlett. You learn about fishin' from we."

IN the days that followed old Gus learned. The schooner held undeviatingly to her course until the shrewd master knew that they were on the grounds. Then tables were set up on deck and Gus was initiated into the intricacies of making soft bait stick to innumerable hooks while his clumsy old hands, stiff with the icy cold, fumbled in what seemed untold miles of tubbed cod line with those gangs of hooks so arranged that the line might be baited and later run out of a tossing dory without a single hook fouling.

Beside him, sniffing and snorting and openly bursting into violent cursing at every fresh sign of his clumsiness, was his dory mate, the carping Garge. Melancholy by nature, the little man was even more morose and fault finding over the substitution of this incompetent for the best dory mate a trawler ever knew.

His face a living picture of a foreknowledge of great disaster yet to come, he invariably presaged every complaint to Gus with a boastful, "I been to sea dese t'irty years an' I never see such a clumsy dolt of a dory mate. You noddin' but a lunkhead Svede, und I t'ink you goin' svamp me vunce ve get avay in de dory."

Old Gus's shoulders shook with another chuckle. His eyes twinkled before they disappeared in the wrinkles.

"Den ve vash ashore und I vin dat bet," he guffawed.

But even chuckles could not stem that tirade of wrath. Old Gus did his best, but his best was always wrong, and the chuckling rejoinders only infuriated the watchful Garge all the more. If Gus rowed while his mate fed out the line, he was accused of pulling too hard on one oar or the other, or he went too fast, or he waddled and wasted valuable time. If he took his turn at feeding out the trawl, he was accused at least once every three fathoms of grabbing too deep into the tub, or hurrying the twine until it slacked and might foul on the bottom, or neglecting to straighten out the kinks that he was likewise accused of having put into it by improper tubbing when he took it in the day before.

But when they under-ran the line, after it had been on the bottom, things were even worse. Never did he flap a slapping cod aboard to the satisfaction of his carping dory mate. Never did he remove a hook that had been gulped far down into a voracious stomach that he did not know more abuse.

A land lubber would have broken under the strain. A man of fiery temper would have turned upon the runt and pitched him overboard. But Gus had known the sea for fifty years and had learned to shed abuse as readily as his borrowed oilskins shed the brine that whipped at them when they quartered into a sea, or the cold rain that frequently beat upon them in driving sheets.

Far from allowing the constant efforts at humiliation to bother him, he grinned broadly and chuckled until his frosty oilskins crackled as that harsh tongue sent him into fresh paroxysms. Old as he was, he could have taken his dour

little mate by the scruff of the neck and dropped him into the brine at any minute, but he grinned and chuckled and went on doing his clumsy best and arousing fresh bursts of anger.

"Garge," he would ask at least three times during the day, when the little man gasped for fresh breath with which to pour out more bitterness, "how far you t'ink ve be from shore?"

"A t'ousan' mile, mebbe twelve hunert," Garge would snap. "You vant to svim it, I gif' you a kick in de pants to start you off."

Gus would only chuckle anew and cast a speculative eye at the schooner, laying off and on to wait for the dories to fill, and renew his speculations. Sometimes he was so deep and secretive in his shrewd way that Garge would sit open mouthed and stare at him, unable to fathom the inspiration of those ever recurrent chuckles that set the old shoulders to vibrating again and again.

"You like dis trawlin', eh?" Garge asked suspiciously.

"It de vorst vork a man efer do," growled Gus, "und I hate it. I yoost thinkin' I goin' to vin dat bet yet."

Then Garge would snort again and think of more vitriolic remarks with which to scourge the leathery soul of his mate.

Not infrequently Gus would idle at oars or reel, staring far off at the loitering schooner, seemingly estimating her position and the visibility.

"You don' need to be afraid she miss us," sniffed Garge one thick day when the fog almost hid the *Gertie May*. "De Ol' Man smell his dories ten mile avay."

"He could, easy enough," snorted Gus. "But I ain' afraid he lose us. I afraid he von't."

Garge stared at him, the oars for once idle in his flippers, his jaw dropped incredulously.

"You don' know from nothin'," he said, shaking his head at the thought of trying to teach this greenie anything at all. "It no joke to drif' in an open dory off here. Dis is a big ocean."

Gus reared his head with an angry jerk.

"Vhat do you cod killers know about dis ocean?" he demanded. "You on'y play aroun' in vun corner vhere de fish come. You ain' seen no ocean yet."

THEY were not lost that day nor the next, although the fog hung about them and grew thicker. Captain Bartlett had his dories over if he could see a mile through the haze, and his men went without a grumble, aware that he could find them miraculously if the blanket thickened.

"I miss Lunenberg Sharlie in de fog," sighed Garge, shaking his head dolefully. "Dat ol' cuss could smell his vay t'rough a Frenchman's pea soup. I nefer learn to make de ship in fog because Sharlie nefer miss."

"Den I glad I got you instead of him vit' me," grinned Gus. "Maybe ve lose her yet. Den ve got to row ashore, huh? Dat vay I vin my bet."

Again Garge stopped rowing to stare at him. His head thrust forward on his scrawny neck, his sad eyes blinking.

"You get dat out of your he't," he grunted. "Nobody goin' row a dory ashore. I tell you she's more as a t'ousan' mile."

"Dat a pretty fair row before breakfas'," admitted Gus. "I guess ve need somet'ing to eat und drink, eh? Ve haf' to fix dat up."

The fog was still thicker next morning as Gus came shuffling from the galley, his short oilskin jacket bulging mysteriously. The men were grouped about the nested dories, staring disconsolately at the gray wall that hemmed them in forebodingly.

Captain Bartlett rolled toward them, his face deeply furrowed with a frown. Swiftly he looked from one worried countenance to another.

"What do you say, boys?" he asked, being a partner with them. "Do we put 'em over, or do you want to stay aboard?"

"Sure ve put 'em ofer," grinned Gus. "You t'ink I vant to stay out here und vait for dem fish to svim aboart? I vant to go back to Boston und get drunk und forget de codfish. I game to go, if dem sissy is afraid."

The men laughed at that and the tension was broken. Dory after dory

swung away and rowed off into the fog. Garge dipped oars with a bitter suspicion of his companion and poked him once or twice in the back as he reached for a fresh grip with his blades, spitefully determined to anger the old Swede for once.

Gus only threw back his head, opened his mouth, and burst into his battle song:

"Ten t'ousan' Svedes yoomp out of
de veeds
At de battle of Copenhagen."

"Shut up," snapped Garge. "You scare de fish. Dey hear dat sqvawkin' a good mile down."

Gus only chuckled and rowed. The schooner was a fast disappearing blot behind them, her fog horn a mournful thuttering bellow like the moan of a fresh cow away from her hungry calf.

"Ve better put her down," said Garge, boating his oars. "Ve far enough off de oders."

"Dey right aboart us," insisted Gus. "Ve row a liddle furder. You vorse dan a baby, de vay you scairt of yoost a little visp of fog. You ought to see a real fog vunce."

He kept on rowing, digging deeper, dragging harder at the oars than Garge appreciated, grinning to himself as his arms rubbed against his secret cache.

The schooner brayed again and again, the signal growing fainter and fainter. Garge fumbled his way past his dory mate and started to get the trawl into the water.

"Gif' a toot on dat horn to show dem aboart de schooner vhere ve be," he suggested. "Den Cap'n Bartlett nefer lose we."

Old Gus lifted the tin fish horn to his lips, fumbled with it, and suddenly dropped it overboard, where it began to sink slowly. Garge made a mad lunge after it, nearly pitching overboard as Gus dipped an oar and the flipper fell far short of the sinking tin.

"You be de deat' of us yet," wailed Garge, wringing the water from his soaked sleeve and glowering at the apologetic Gus, who could not keep the twinkle from his crinkling face as the little man sprawled awkwardly and floundered back to his feet.

"Ve hear de schooner easy enough," consoled Gus, still pulling away at the oars and inching still farther from the ship. "Ve got no need to vorry."

"Lunenberg Sharlie could get us back," sighed Garge, "but I t'ink ve los' vidout dat horn. Cap'n von't know vhere to find we."

Faint and far away the sounds of other tin horns signaling their positions to the schooner came to them, echoing oddly, the direction lost to them.

"I guess ve got too far avay," admitted Gus, his shrewd old eyes on the compass which he had tucked between the foot boards. "I sving aroun' und row back a vays."

He made a great show of backing water and tugging at the oars, then resumed his rowing again, while Garge hunched in the high stern and shuddered with premonition, taking off his sou'wester to allow his loving cup ears to catch every whisper of a fog horn voice.

"Dere she blow," called Gus enthusiastically as a mighty roar sounded afar off.

Garge snorted with his usual disdain, his nose wrinkling until his drooping mustache vibrated.

"A lot you know about it! Dat vas a steamer vhistlin'. She goin' tearin' pas' here and might wreck we."

Still Gus rowed, grinning to himself as he stole an occasional peep at the compass his boot covered the rest of the time. He knew from the hopeless look on Garge's face that the little man had utterly lost his sense of direction. The blasts of the *Gertie May's* horn had long ago been lost to them.

Then that steamer's roar came again, nearer, more menacing. Gus chuckled as Garge shivered. It was all a huge joke to the old Swede.

Again and again that wail came from the rapidly approaching steamer, weirdly echoing, seeming at times to approach and then to recede, only to burst the next time so near as to startle even old Gus.

"Lunenberg Sharlie vould have us aboart de schooner by now," protested the terrified little man, who seemed to

shrink even smaller in the stern of the dory.

SOMEWHERE near at hand a wave started to break with a mighty seething hiss that approached nearer and nearer. Then a thrumming vibration sounded through that ever increased noise, somehow menacing, threatening. Then, directly over their heads, it seemed, the roar of the steamer's fog horn bellowed at them again.

Something white bore at them, barely visible, resolving into a wall of creaming water through which lifted a mighty peak of red that changed to looming black that towered high over them. Then two mighty hawseholes like leering eyes were glowering at them as a mighty ship sped onward, one eye blinking shut as the great hull set their dory to rocking into that rushing wall of bone she carried in her teeth.

It was old Gus who had presence of mind enough to lift one oar and fend them away from that omnipotent giant as the wave struck them, almost capsized them, and sent them hissing along just clear of that rivet-studded wall of steel. Likewise it was old Gus who resumed rowing madly as soon as that boiling wake had ceased to toss and jerk them in its roil.

"Ve got to get back to de schooner und see she be safe," he grunted, although his compass told him the *Gertie May* was full twenty points off the steamer's course and far astern of the surging dory. "You better len' a han'. Ve vant to be aroun' to pick up anybody she don' drown if she hit dat schooner."

Again they rowed together in perfect unison, backs and arms straining, the light dory surging forward. Neither of them spoke as Garge's anxiety mounted.

"You t'ink ve over run 'em?" he asked at last, puffing as he idled dripping oars and cocked his great ears to listen in vain for any toot of a horn.

Gus sighed and wiped a fictitious tear from his eye. That shaking of his shoulder was a suppressed chuckle but it passed as a sob with the unsuspecting Garge.

"I didn't like to tell you, Garge," he mumbled at last, choking with a giggle but making it sound like a moan as he kept his back to the worried little man, "but I heard a crash yoost after she tear pas' us. I'm afraid she sink de *Gertie May* vid all hands."

"But she vasn't near us," protested Garge. "I didn' hear her blow for a long time, nor dem boat neider."

"De boats mus' of put back aboart. I hadn't heard dem for some time before dat steamer pass, but I hear de *Gertie May* hoot a couple times yoost when de murderin' ol' rusher vas comin' at us. I guess ve de on'y vuns lef', Garge."

He did not voice what was on his mind, waiting for Garge to do that. Sooner or later he must make the suggestion.

"Ve might as vell get de trawl over und fish," grunted Garge, much to the disgust of the impatient Gus, who wanted to be off upon the long row he contemplated. "De *Gertie May* stan' by und pick us up if she ain't los' for fair. If she be, some oder schooner fin' us vhen she clear und dey be glad to take de fish. I run out, I guess."

Gus remonstrated feebly, but Garge got the line overboard. Before it was all down, the fog began to thin.

A cold northeast wind beat upon them. The mist whirled away before it, revealing an empty ocean tossing on every side as far as the eye could reach, with no schooner's masts heaving above the horizon and no pitching dory rising on a neighboring swell.

"Ve stay here und boat our fish," nodded Garge, after a worried look around that made his forlorn face and figure droop even more. "Somebody drif' by und pick us up."

Gus straightened his sagged old form, his eyes flashing.

"Ve do noddin' of de kin'!" he roared, his face grim with determination. "I sick of de sight of dem codfish. Ve pull up dat trawl or cut her loose und ve row ashore."

Garge cackled at him, a shrill laugh of derision.

"You know how much is a t'ousan' or mebbe tvelve hunert mile?" he asked,

giggling hysterically. "You can' row dat on no empty stomick. Ve got to have fish to eat if ve goin' to row ashore."

Gus held both oars in one great hand and fished with the other inside his jacket. A loaf of bread came out, followed by another and another as his stuffy appearance amidships dwindled.

"Dis help a liddle," he grinned. "Ve got de vacumum boddles for'ard too," jerking his head toward two quart bottles. "I sneak anudder vun from de galley vhen de cook ain' lookin'."

Garge stared at him solemnly. Gus took the expression for suspicion and hastened to cover with a lie he had prepared in advance.

"I dream ve goin' to get set adrif'. I t'ink ve yoost as vell be on de safe side. Now ve row."

Garge began to whimper. Cold and fog and biting wind, a drifting boat, rowing to and from the ship, handling miles of trawl and tons of fish in icy weather, all of these he knew and understood and took in stride as a part of the day's work, but the thought of rowing a full thousand miles was too much for his feeble imagination.

But Gus had pumped many a leaking ship twice as far in his day, had known shipwreck and long hopeless hours in an open boat. To him the thousand miles of tossing sea that separated them from the shore was only another of those monotonous journeys that must be negotiated in the eternal pilgrimage between sprees.

The half laid trawl came up at his insistence, although it had served as an anchor for the hopes of poor Garge. The fish stiffened in the bottom of the boat as Garge slatted them off the hooks and reeled in line.

"Ve better cut dat line and get avay," growled Gus.

"Maybe ve need her for a sea anchor, vhen she blow," protested Garge and reeled steadily.

"Ve usin' no sea anchor. Ve ridin' to Boston town vid dis vind astern. I sick of dis fishin' business."

The last fish was stiff about his feet by the time that the whimpering Garge floundered past him and resumed his oars. They rowed on steadily, Gus guiding them with his compass. The wind remained in the northeast and helped them on their way.

THEIR lunch was left untasted until nightfall, when they gulped half of the supply of thick sandwiches, washing them down with meager sips of the still hot coffee. Gus eyed the remaining provisions dubiously, then squinted one eye and embarked upon what was to him a profound calculation of estimated speed, distance, and time involved in their contemplated journey.

The sight of the fish suddenly angered him and he bent forward to seize a forty pound cod by the tail and send it arching high to plop into a lifting wave. It sank slowly in a seethe of tiny bubbles, then surged to the top again, turned a great glassy eye reprovingly, and became a mere lighter blotch against the darker sea as the wind drove the dory onward.

Gus lifted another fish and another. Garge ceased whimpering to protest.

"Maybe ve need to eat dem," he whined.

Gus snorted, shuddering at the possibility. There was nothing aboard that dory that could be spared for fuel, no place where a fire could be kindled. After his experience at catching, splitting, and salting hundreds of the loathsome things he could not bear to think of eating the cold white flesh raw.

Garge was so unnerved that he allowed the last six fish to remain on the foot boards. Their weight was negligible compared to keeping Garge sane and at work.

"You lay down und get some shut-eye, Garge," he suggested, as darkness enshrouded them and that bitter wind continued. "I keep her off afore de vind for a vhile."

Garge, meek as a puppy, accordingly stowed himself as comfortably as he could in the bow, shielded from the worst of the wind, and slept. During the night Gus rowed and chuckled at his cleverness in slipping away from the distant schooner, and rowed again. His tough old body, hardened by hauling on many a rope, seemed tireless.

It was dawn when Garge stirred and rubbed his eyes. Gus grudgingly agreed that they might as well finish their sandwiches and take another nip or two of the coffee. The drink had lost some of its heat, but was more than welcome. Then Garge took over the oars and Gus crawled forward to sleep.

Not a sign of a ship showed all through the long weary day. Garge rowed but fitfully, unable to put his spirit into what he considered a hopeless task. He sat idling at the oars, barely dipping them, holding their blades to the breeze, and keeping her head before that helpful northeaster.

When Gus aroused in the late afternoon they both rowed in unison until dark, when the old Swede grudgingly sawed off a chunk of bread and divided it between them. He had barely munched half of his share when he heard Garge grunting behind him and turned to see him gouging a slab of meat from one of the fish.

Gus swallowed with difficulty, worrying the bread. When he heard those teeth crunching into the frozen flesh, he half turned and handed the rest of his bread to the little man.

"Eat dis, if you can eat anything," he called gruffly and began to row hard again to warm himself.

Once more Garge slept while Gus rowed and dozed and rowed again. Early in the evening the lights of a great steamer lifted above the horizon astern and came steadily toward them. He did not waken Garge, aware that they had no light with which to signal the ship, fearful that the little man would go mad with disappointment if they were not sighted.

He heard the thrum of her engines and the swish of her bow wave, could even catch the strains of the orchestra playing for a dance as somebody opened a door and released the sound, but his frantic waving availed nothing. Black against the black sea, the boat and its occupants went unnoticed by the lookouts. The ship sped on and left them even more lonely than before.

The next day the cold forced them to eat more of their bread and drink more of the coffee. Garge ate more of the raw fish, but Gus only shuddered and turned his back.

The wind picked up and blew half a gale, slapping spray over them, coating them with ice that crackled and crazed as they stirred. The sky became over clouded and darkness brought a spit of snow.

The flakes came floating idly at first, fine and evasive, scaling across the wind or edging into it with add little whirls. It ticked against their oilskins and hissed into the sea as it steadied to a thick fall that blotted out everything they could not feel.

"We freeze to deat'," moaned Garge.

"Not vhile ve row," declared Gus grimly. "Dat keep us varm—und bring us nearer Boston."

THE bread went faster. The coffee had lost its warmth and was beginning to freeze. The second day of the blizzard there was nothing left but the raw fish. Garge ate it greedily, and even Gus was reduced to chewing at it with rising gorge but grim determination to keep on going somehow.

The third day of the blizzard Garge murmured that he could row no more, burrowed into the soft snow that had collected in the bow, and proceeded to fall asleep. When Gus kicked him and cursed at him to drive him back to work to keep his blood circulating, he only moaned and whimpered, but would not get up.

"Softie!" snorted Gus. "You sof' as one of dem fool hake you take on dem trawl sometime. You yoost an ol' voman. I show you de Svedes is men."

He went back to the oars and rowed. He threw back his head and roared his ancient battle song, improvising for the occasion:

> Ten t'ousan' rod of trawl for cod
> Vid liddle Garge to ten' dem,
> Vun ship go by und all hands die
> If Goos vas nefer send 'em.
> But ol' Goos know de vay to row
> Und Goos he keep on rowin'
> His back is ol' und stiff vid col'
> But still he keep on goin'."

The snow had long ago filled the dory until she rode like a great frosted cake with the white icing hanging over the gunnels. The whipped spray froze, making a hard crust over the downy contents that shed water or allowed it to freeze in an ever thickening coat. Except for that one hole forward, where a faint wreath of steam occasionally wafted upward to proclaim that Garge still lived in his coverlet of icing, there was no break in the glittering surface except where it crunched feebly an inch or two around that still moving torso in the center.

How long he rowed he did not know. Delirium caught him up. Exhaustion seized him. He slept and drifted and waked and rowed again, growing feebler of body, but still retaining that undying urge to keep on going.

Remembering that he was a better man than the exhausted little fisherman in the bow, he chuckled in spite of frosted cheeks.

The chuckle ended abruptly as he became aware of the oddest phenomenon he had ever encountered. A human being, swathed in a seaman's peajacket, muffler, and knitted cap, was floating and dangling before him in the air like a great spider on a thread.

He blinked the caked snow from his lids to peer again. But the vision would not disappear. He giggled at his own foolishness for imagining such a thing, wondering if death was to be so near like drunkenness. Then the swaying figure swooped nearer.

He was too iced to flinch away, even if it struck him. He tried in vain to dodge, then, as the heels of the dangling man struck against the ice, he tried to turn to see if he was suspended from the gaff or yard of a rescue ship.

The thumping heels broke through. The figure sprawled suddenly before him.

"You alive?" called a voice as the body jerked up again, then swooped down once more to ram both feet deep into the snowy depths just astern of Gus's bent body.

"De lil' feller need help worse dan me," Gus mumbled through the two great icicles than hung from his mustache and made him resemble a walrus more than ever. "Ve two of us here, und he need help firs'. I git along."

The slipping, sliding figure clumsily pawed about with mittened hands and found the ring bolt at stern and bow to make fast the sling. Then it was an easy task for the revenue cutter, summoned by the Nantucket lightship when the dory drifted into range, to swing the boat and its burden aboard. A score of hands broke out the stiff bodies and got them below to thaw out.

"You gif' me a good drink of rum," Gus gurgled, his thawing face twitching into a grin, "und I row clean arount de vorld."

Garge brightened after a long swig of brandy and turned to sniff at him. "You talkin' about rowin', Svede, you ought to see ol' Lunenberg Sharlie. He be ashore t'ree days ago if he be along."

"Dat vas on'y a Sun'ay school picnic," belittled Gus. "I row ashore again if dey efer shanghai me some more on von of dem stinkin' trawl fishermans. Dat is yackass vork for fair. I radder row like dat dan ten' dem trawl."

He chuckled again until the bunk shook with him, thinking of the quart of whiskey Garge owed him. Then he gave such a violent shudder that the doctor bent nearer, fearing a chill.

"On'y de nex' time ve row ashore from dem banks ve take along some more grub. I don' like dem codfish sangridges."

Then, as the guardsmen stared inquiringly, he explained.

"Dem is two raw codfishes, vid anudder von in betveen. I yoost as soon—" making a wry face and looking around for some odious comparison, but shuddering at sight of Garge's socks, steaming over a radiator. "I yoost as soon—" His old frame began to shake with another convulsive chuckle. His face cracked into a myriad of wrinkles that almost buried his twinkling eyes as his mustache began to twitch and jerk again. "You know, I yoost as soon make a meal off dat liddle runt of a Garge, or efen dat ol' Lunenberg Sharlie."

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet

AT this Camp-Fire we have the pleasant task of welcoming a new man into our Writers' Brigade. He comes of a naval background. He is Wayne Francis Palmer, author of the fact story, "Hell Ship", and he says:

I was raised in Paducah, Kentucky, long enough ago to see two young men take the I. C. railroad north; one to buck the rigors of New York journalism, and the second to dodge the pitfalls of Washington politics. I have followed the roads that both Irving Cobb and Alben Barkley took with the result that always comes to the man who divides his fire.

Andover, Dartmouth and five years as a lieutenant in the United States Navy were milestones of interest to me. Duty during the War under Admiral Hugh Rodman, U. S. Navy and Admiral Sir David Beatty, R. N. in the Grand Fleet in the North Sea gave me a taste of front line duty. After the Armistice there followed three years of invention and research in submarine ordnance which developed a turn for analytical thinking and a certain suspicion of the too obvious fact. Then I harkened to the call of the great outside, left the navy and found myself in time heading up a steel company where I dabbled in engineering, struggled with finance and had a wonderful time spanning rivers and puncturing the sky with great steel structures. There followed the depression and I was forced to give a practical turn to my hobby of naval reading and writing. My pencil became the rod that must smite the rock before plenty would once again gush forth. Politics and the urge of the great crusade of the New Deal took me to Washington, where wrestling with the codes of N.R.A. and the vast potentialities in the economic and social values of F.H.A. interrupted the work of writing that I had come to love. Invigorated mentally by the experience, but frankly somewhat disillusioned, I am again in my own business of engineering and finance. By making it my hobby I again find time to turn out occasional stories and articles.

In my naval reading in English I found a complete lack of reliable information on the happenings on the Baltic and the Black Sea during the last war. I decided to tackle the job of making this information available, so I moved a former Czarist naval lieutenant into my home for two years. Nicholai Ivonavich Babarykoff served me in many ways. He was a foil for the naval and international arguments that I advanced in my articles. His energy was inexhaustible and he could read intensively for twenty-four hours in a stretch without eye strain. He not only translated from Russian but aided me in digging through German and French to check the other side of our facts and stories.

It wasn't long before we were through with our history, with over 5000 pages of typewritten source material ready for arranging. The stories, however, behind the history had caught us and of course in the Russian navy these had to do with mutinies.

One side of a controversial story did not satisfy us as we rummaged through the records of the Soviet, which are quite complete in the Congressional Library in Washington. We wanted the Czarist side also, and were lucky enough to find the Czar's own private naval library in the basement of the Harvard Law School in Cambridge. But all that was just history, so we went after the principal actors in these dramas. Here a taxi driver, there a ship building foreman, an aviation designer, a caricaturist, a banker, an hydrographer—one by one we uncovered them until we had marshalled the men who had been principal actors in the greatest mutinies at sea in modern times. They took us away from cold history and gave us the human side that makes for adventure.

TWO comrades who were sergeants in the Philippine campaigns add their voices to the discussion of the massacre of American soldiers at Balangiga. From Gladewater, Texas, writes Robert Wilson, Sergeant Company I, 9th U. S. Infantry:

In reply to request of Col. David Evans of New York for information concerning the

massacre of Company C 9th Infantry. I was a member of Company I of the same regiment at the time, stationed in the interior of Samar.

Company C consisted of about seventy-two men and three officers, Captain Connell, First Lieutenant Bumpus and Doctor Girard, and was stationed in a two story wooden building beside the church with a large door opening into the church. They were using the second story as quarters and the ground floor as a mess hall. The town was one of the three designated as a concentration camp for the natives to report to and receive food and medical attention.

Captain Connell authorized the *Presidente* to throw any native in the guardhouse, and this he did on several occasions. And on the day before the massacre he had jailed a large bunch of them and they were confined without being searched and all of them had bolos concealed in their clothing and at a signal, they were able to overpower the guard and kill them. The people at church had all carried bolos concealed in their clothing and when the bell was rung, it was the signal for the attack, and they opened the door leading from the church to the mess hall where the company was at breakfast. There was a rush for the stairs, which broke, and it left the soldiers to fight with their mess knives against the bolos. Sergt. Markley and cook Considine got back to back, one with an axe and the other armed with a baseball bat. There were four or five men upstairs and they threw rifles and belts down to the men in the mess hall, which some few were able to get.

With the help of the sergeant and the cook, there were about sixteen men that fought their way to the beach where they got a small boat and put to sea, most of them being wounded. Doctor Girard and Lt. Bumpus were killed in quarters and Captain Connell jumped from the second story and was killed in the street trying to make his way to the company and there were ten or twelve dead natives around his body.

When the Eleventh U. S. Infantry landed three days later, there were two hundred and seventy dead natives.

The natives were well treated by the soldiers and Captain Connell was a very efficient officer. The natives were treated pretty hard after this as they mutilated the bodies of the officers and men.

There should be some of the survivors of this fight living, although I do not know of any.

VARNER V. SESSIONS speaks up from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He also was there, handling the mass of telegraph messages that followed the shocking news.

While I was not present, I was a Sergeant in the Signal Corps, stationed either at Tayabas, Province of Tayabas, Island of Luzon, which point was a relay station for all telegraphic communication between Manila and the Southern Islands, or else stationed in the central office in Manila, and remember distinctly copying or reading all telegraphic communications in this connection. I also, later, talked to many of the personnel of the 9th Infantry who were thoroughly conversant with all the details in connection with this sad affair, and I am giving you below a short story of this massacre, which, to the best of my recollections, is true. It may be over or underdrawn as the case may be:

"C" Co. of the 9th Infantry was quartered in the living quarters of a Catholic church in Balangiga. As the Insurrection on Samar had not reached the proportions as on Luzon, there was a false sense of security among the American soldiers which caused them to be very slack in taking proper precautions. It seems that it was their habit to close and bar the down stairs door at meal times in order that the sentry might eat with the rest of the company. A Filipino was allowed to go through the soldiers' quarters to ring the church bells at stated intervals during the day, and on the morning of the massacre he had been admitted and opened the door to Lucban's men during the breakfast hour, they rushing the Americans in the mess hall. Now, mind you, the American soldiers were entirely without arms, while the Filipinos were armed with bolos, rifles and revolvers. With table knives, legs of tables and their bare fists, the Americans fought several times their number until all were killed except four men, who fought their way to their rifles and escaped through the windows. It is my recollection that these four men, upon looking back from their retreat, saw the flag still flying, and decided to return and get it. Two of the four were killed—the other two succeeding in rescuing the flag.

The statement of Captain Townsend "that certain acts by the soldiers has tended to increase the hostility at Balangiga" is news to me, and I am of the opinion that the Captain has been misinformed.

The Persians had their Thermopylae; the Texans had their Alamo, and the British their Omdurman, but neither of these were comparable with the fight put up by "C" Company of the 9th Infantry at Balangiga. To my mind, and I have been a student of American history, there is nothing in the annals of our arms that can compare with this epic, and the valor displayed by these American soldiers should be written in letters of gold on the pages of our history.

COMRADE Sessions wrote to National Society—Army of the Philippines, Boston, Mass., and received a reply from National Secretary J. S. Wood, dated June 22, 1938. It answers a question that has come up frequently in discussions we've heard among army men—what about survivors, aren't any of them alive now? Here is a list supplied by Mr. Wood:

WOUNDED: Sergeant George F. Markley, Corporal James Pickett, Corporal Taylor B. Hickman, Privates Henry Claas, Ernest U. Ralston, Henry W. Manire, John Uhtop, George E. Myers, Sergeant John D. Closson, Privates Albert B. Keller, Charles F. Marak, William J. Gibbs, Melvin M. Walls, Corporal Arnold Irish, Privates Elbert B. DeGraffenreid, Clifford M. Mumby, Sergeant Frank Betron, Private Adolph Gamlin, Cook Richard Considine, Corporal Sylvester Burke, Privates George Allen and Carl E. Swanson.

Note: All the above listed as wounded are alive today except Corporal James Pickett, who died from wounds received in abdomen. (Died August 21, 1931.)

NOT WOUNDED: Privates Roland Clark, Anthony T. Qula and Walter J. Berthold.

Note: Clark and Berthold are still living.

IN the last issue we published a full account of the affair through the kindness of Colonel Albert T. Rich, retired, who sent us all the official reports as well as the information he got from questioning insurrectos who were in the surprise attack. Some of the material had to be omitted, and will be given here:

INVESTIGATION showed that a warning of this uprising was in the hands of American military authorities all the while, but had not been read by them. In the capture of Lucban's headquarters, August 25, 1901, were taken official papers in Spanish and Visayan and among them was this one, dated May 30, 1901.

TO THE GENERAL IN CHIEF OF THIS PROVINCE OF SAMAR:

As a representative of this town of Balangiga I have the honor to let you know, after having conferred with the principals of this town about the policy to be pursued with the enemy in case they come in, we have agreed to have a fictitious policy with them, doing whatever they may like, and when the occasion comes the people will strategically rise up against them.

This I communicate to you for your superior knowledge, begging of you to make known to the army your favorable approval of the same, if you think it convenient.

May God preserve you many years.

Balangiga, 30th of May, 1901.

P. ABAYAN, Local Chief.

THE Balangiga massacre took place on September 28, 1901, and the letter of the *jefe local* was not real until some time in October, according to report made by Captain Robert H. Noble, Third U. S. Infantry, Adjutant General, Fifth Separate Brigade.

THE massacre was hailed, naturally, as a glorious victory by the insurrectos. Lucban sent out the following message to another *jefe local*. It may be noted, as was true in the World War, that each side was an ally of God, and there is a hint also of trouble with profiteers.

TO THE LOCAL CHIEF OF NATIVIDAD:

On this date the colonel informs me that with great pleasure he communicates to you for your general knowledge, and satisfaction to all the people, the glorious achievement carried out successfully in the town of Balangiga on September 28, at 7 o'clock in the morning, by the inhabitants, led by the great local leader, assisted by the leading men of the town, and without other arms than bolos, overcoming in less than five minutes the detachment of the enemy, composed of 75 men.

All were killed, including a major, a captain, and a lieutenant, with the exception of 5 badly wounded, who survived and escaped in small boats to the adjacent province of Leyte. We captured all their rifles, 20,000 rounds of ammunition, sabres, and, in short, everything in the barracks of the enemy and in the quarters of the American major. On our part we sustained no loss.

Providential events like these clearly demonstrate the justice of a God.

We desire you to attempt the same thing against the enemy, and with them demonstrate in sight of the nations our dignity, and with them bequeath to our successors, fame and honesty, those successors whom we have made happy with their independence.

For the last, these headquarters comprehending the stoppage of agriculture in this province, decrees that all the inhabitants will not suffer the price of food stuffs to be raised during the course of the war, this in order to protect our present and projected plans.

God keep and guard you.

Given at the headquarters of Samar and Leyte this 6th day of October, 1901.

LUCBAN,
Department Commander.

WE Received a letter from Morocco, written in French, and upon translation it read this way:

Sir:

Forgive the boldness that a Legionnaire takes in writing this letter which I hope will not bother you too much. Lost in the Moroccan country, without family, without affection, I would be very happy to find a feminine correspondent to whom I could sincerely trust myself. I ask if you will please insert an ad in your paper, free of charge, for I tell you frankly, sir, that my means at the present time would not permit me to pay you for this ad, therefore I call upon your kindness.

Having been in the Legion for a rather long time, the nostalgia of the beautiful countries that I travelled through in my youth have given me what is called here "le cafard". So a feminine correspondent to whom I could trust my sorrows as well as my joys would help me to bear the weak moments.

Sir, I put my hope in your hands hoping that my request will be granted. Please receive my entire and sincere gratitude.

Your servant,
Legionnaire Paul Druquet
2nd Regiment Etrengers, 2nd Battalion
C.M.2 Khenifra, Maroc.

P.S.: If you need more ample information, do not hesitate to ask me for it. I will always be ready to supply it.

THE POLAR BEAR

Fiercest and most reckless of the bears is the Polar Bear. When he rears up on his hind legs he towers to a height between nine and ten feet. He weighs 1500 pounds.

Though his coat is white the year 'round, he does not spend the year in the sea. In summer he goes inland looking for berries.

He is an extremely enduring and clever swimmer, on the surface and below. His living is made in pursuit of seals and fishes.

A polar bear usually gives birth to two cubs each year, in a lair burrowed out deep in the snow.

A somewhat rare, but welcome change of diet to the polar bear is the Barren Ground Caribou.

The caribou is also the American Woodland Reindeer, and roams the north in great herds. The Crees call it "Attehk." The Copper Indians call it "Tantseeah."

Lynn Bogue Hunt

ASK ADVENTURE

Information you can't get elsewhere

THE Mayan hunting arm—Hul-che.

Request:—I recall reading an article describing the construction and use of the throwing-stick employed by the Ancient Mayas in hunting.

If you were the author of that particular article, can you give me some information regarding these implements and how they were made?

As I remember it, the article stated that, instead of the regulation thirty-inch arrow, these old hunters used something more on the order of a javelin, longer, heavier, and feathered somewhat differently.

Just how formidable was one of these weapons in the hands of a powerful man who knew just how to handle it?

How did it compare in range and effectiveness with the average-sized bow?

I have done considerable work with a bow at different times during my life and know that one, in the hands of a skillful archer is a weapon which will furnish a mighty unpleasant surprise both in effectiveness and range. I have also done a great deal of bait casting and realize what leverage a springy rod gives to one's throwing arm when properly handled.

Were these throwing sticks considered a really serious weapon or were they used more in the hunting of small game by the Mayas?

Any information that you can give me regarding the above will be greatly appreciated.

Walter V. Miller, Germantown, N. Y.

Reply by Mr. Earl B. Powell:—The hul-che was used by the Mayas in war and chase and was about nineteen inches over all, with a hook at the extreme tip, which fitted in a cup in the butt of the javelin. This javelin was usually feathered like an overgrown arrow, and was thrown with an overhand sweep, with a follow-through which guided the course of the dart to the target.

At the shorter ranges, it was far more effective than the bow on account of the heavier missile, but at longer distances the bow far surpassed it both in force and accuracy. However, at short ranges, it would kill far more certainly than the bow.

Its farthest range that I have been able to get was about four hundred feet at the most, but I believe that it could be thrown farther with the proper darts and practice in snapping them across.

When Cortez landed in Yucatan, he found little gold to get and a lot of hard fighting against the Mayan archers and Hul-Che men, and so he went on up to where the pickings were better and the fighting not so hard. This is history. Moneojo landed a little later, and fought them with the most up to date European weapons, and it took him and his son two generations to subdue the Mayas, and the use of the hul-che was one of the things that the Mayas depended on against firearms.

The weapon is not to be taken lightly. It will throw a javelin of light weight and about 4 to 4½ feet long (as near as I can judge from sculptures and paintings available) about three times as far as by hand and with terrific force. I would not hesitate to try it on any game that walks the earth—if I had running room, or protection.

I got a great deal of my information from the noted archeologist, T. A. Willard. Not so long ago he wrote to me from Merida, Yucatan, that the Mayan boys were taking Hul-che up again, staging this revival from implements and information on the casting of the things I furnished him, and that one of them had speared an iguana with little trouble, so *I* have hopes of some day seeing the Maya in his native habitat killing lizards and what have you with his native weapon.

WHAT was the origin of the Chinese?

Request:—I am very interested in "Ancient China." Where was the original center of

Chinese civilization? Did they develop their own culture? Were the Japanese of the same root stock as the Chinese? What were the separate dynasties, and is Shang the first one?

I have before me "The Birth of China" by Creel. What others do you recommend? What do you consider the best book on Confucius?

—F. E. Shaw, Tulsa, Okla.

Reply by Mr. Seward S. Cramer:—We have never definitely determined the original center of Chinese civilization—if by that term you mean to ask from whence did they come. There are several theories. One is that they came from the Tarim basin and spread along the Wei River. Another is that they came from the section now known as the western Gobi and Singkiang and moved southeast into the Wei and Yellow River valleys. I don't agree with either of these, as I believe that the Chinese did not migrate into their lands but that they were really an evolutionary development within their own areas. I do not think that it is beyond reason to have two simultaneous evolutionary developments—one in the Near East and the other in China.

If on the other hand, your question refers to where the civilization developed after the people had progressed to a state that could function, then my answer is definitely that area around the Yellow River valley and extending west to the Wei valley. I believe that you will find more and more people coming to the belief that the real cradle of civilization is this section.

The Chinese did definitely develop their own culture. Of course, we are apt to think that trade with China developed only within the past two or three hundred years. This belief is absolutely false, as we have definite proof of trade with Europe in the old Roman and Greek days. The Chinese culture was somewhat encouraged, let us say, by this trade, but there was more influence of Chinese culture on Europe than the other way around. I believe that, had there been no intercourse beyond Asiatic boundaries, China would still have developed as she did up to the last century.

Present day Japanese are a mixture of Mongolian, Manchurian, Korean and Malaynesian stock. I am not speaking of the aboriginal Ainus when I make that statement.

Shang is not the first dynasty. We really are not certain as to the correct name of the first. However, here is as accurate a list as I know of:

Patriarchal Period	3000-2205	B.C.
Hsia	2205-1766	
Shang or Yin	1766-1122	
Chou	1122- 255	
Ch'in	255- 206	
Early Han (Western)	B.C.206- 25	A.D.
Later Han (Eastern)	25- 221	
Three Kingdoms (Shu, Wei, Wu)	221- 265	
Six Dynasties	265- 589	
Sui	589- 618	
T'ang	618- 907	
Five Dynasties	907- 960	
Sung	960-1127	
Southern Sung	1127-1280	
Yuan (Mongol)	1280-1368	
Ming	1368-1644	
T'a Ch'ing	1644-1912	

Creel's book is fine, one of the best that I know, but it should appeal more to an archeologist. Why not refer to Hirth's "Ancient History of China"; Parker's "China, Past and Present"; or Gowen and Hall "An Outline History of China." Giles has published a nice reference work in his "A Chinese Biographical Dictionary." For a ready book to dynasties, Ralph Chait recently privately printed a small booklet called "Chinese Chronology" that is very handy. If you want something a bit more simple, you might try Elizabeth Seeger's "Pageant of Chinese History"—a book written for children but easily read by adults.

I think that you would probably like Brian Brown's "The Story of Confucius" or you might prefer one that was written sixty years ago by Robert Douglas—"Confucianism and Taouism." Frederick Starr's "Confucianism" and Richard Wilhelm's "Confucius and Confucianism" are both good.

ASK ADVENTURE goes to the aid of theater gunplay.

Request:—In the play "The Petrified Forest" laid in Arizona, one of the characters, Gramp Maple, says "I've known real killers in my time. They could make a six shooter act like a machine gun. Did you ever hear of fanning? Well, you'd file down the trigger catch till the hammer worked free, and then you'd fan it like this." (Gramp points his index finger at Jackie and wiggles his thumb.)

I have been told that "fanning" was not done with the thumb of the hand holding the revolver but by striking the hammer with the other hand, held open and moved with a fanning motion. Can you explain how this was done so that Gramp could represent it on stage with his hands only. He has no gun when he says the lines.

—R. G. Lewis, Ottawa, Can.

Reply by Mr. Donegan Wiggins:—I can only say that the lads who write the stories

of the gunfighters of past days certainly have fine imaginations; do you by any means recall the one who had his hero "fan his flaming automatic"?

As a matter of fact, the old single-action revolvers, Colt and Remington, could be fanned and fired very fast, by either removing the trigger, tying it back with a cord, or by holding it back with the trigger finger, and with the revolver held at waist level in the hand, slap the hammer back smartly with the edge of the palm of the other hand and produce a volley of shots. If the mainspring and trigger and bolt spring were in good order, that sounded like a good modern double-action revolver being fired in the hands of an expert. Save at the very shortest ranges, the "gun fanner" wasn't apt to hit much, however.

The character in the play mentioned seems to have gotten mixed up, as the thumb cocking was merely fast shooting in the ordinary manner. Of course, he could remove the trigger or hold it back; some folks call this type of shooting "stripping" and I think the description a good one.

I can fan my old S. A. Colt, and did it for Richard Wetjen one day some years ago, and though I only fired two shots to prove its possibility, I recall that they were both in a treetrunk about a foot in diameter, and at the height of a man's beltbuckle, a handbreadth apart. Good enough at close ranges, I presume, as I was about ten yards or so from the tree.

A GLOSSY print, unsalted.

Request:—Every time I get stuck I write you and so here I am again. I desire a perfect gloss on some photographic prints and in spite of all advice and several different kinds of ferrotype liquid—also a change to chromium ferrotype plates—I get a gloss which looks all right unless it is tipped so a glare of light is on the print at which time little dull spots can be seen—a sort of salted effect.

I have washed the plates, polished them with metal polish, have polished them with the liquid until it appeared to be all off and polished them and left some on. I have put it on the plates while they were both hot and cold and still at close inspection myriads of little dull spots show.

Could a second polish of some wax be put on after the prints are off the ferotype plates?

—H. H. Olmsted, Los Angeles, Calif.

Reply by Mr. Paul L. Anderson:—It sounds to me as though your trouble were due to minute air-bubbles between the prints and the ferrotype plates. However, I think you can get rid of it, whatever it is, by following this technique *exactly*.

Throw away your present plates and get new ones, *not* chromium. Wash them well with Castile soap and cool water, rinse thoroughly, and dry them with a clean, soft, lintless cloth. After development, rinse the prints in two changes of water, and give them five minutes in a *freshly mixed* solution of

Water ---------- 32 ounces
Chrome alum---------385 grains

Be sure it is *chrome* alum; get the granular form, which dissolves much more easily than the crystal; use it for one day, then throw it away. This hardens the gelatine tremendously, and incidentally it is a good stop bath to use instead of the ordinary acetic acid stop. Fix in the usual manner, wash thoroughly, and then squeegee the prints on the wet ferrotype plates and allow to dry. Have both the ferrotype plates and the prints below 70° Fahrenheit when squeegeeing. Use a scraper squeegee, not a roller, and *not* one of the photographic squeegees, which are too stiff; get one of the kind that is sold in the hardware stores for cleaning windows. When squeegeeing, have the plate on a smooth, horizontal surface, lower the print slowly on it in a U shape, then hold it in place with the fingers of the left hand, and, beginning a little to the left of the middle, squeegee lightly three or four times toward your right, to expel the water and any trapped air-bubbles. Then squeegee a little more firmly, to get the print into good contact with the plate. Then turn the plate end for end, and squeegee the print down at the other end. This way you should get the print into good contact, with no air between it and the plate. But don't squeegee too hard, so that it won't release.

Do not use any waxing solution. The trick is to have the gelatine hard, the plate clean, and the whole outfit cool—60° F. is better than 70°, if you can manage it. And get good contact, without too much violence. This ought to do the business for you.

Dry the prints as quickly as possible, but with a fan, not by heat. And don't scrub the ferrotype plate when washing it; just wash it well with soap suds and your open hand.

ANCIENT shipwrights left no blueprints.

Request:—It is my earnest desire to construct a complete set of detailed ship models depicting the history of ship building from the beginning to the present day.

In trying to dig information from our public library, I find I have a several years' job compiling plans, etc., alone, and then I'm afraid it won't be complete.

I would appreciate it very much if you could suggest where I could get plans for one in each period so as to have a complete step by step record.

—Howard D. Gregory, Nashville, Tenn.

Reply by Mr. Charles H. Hall:—That's considerable of a program that you are outlining for yourself, isn't it? It looks to me like a lifetime job. But you probably appreciate that fact now, after digging through the library files.

The great difficulty is that there just don't seem to be any plans of vessels earlier than the fifteenth century, at least none that we can rely on. Think of the task that the Nautical Research Society has been doing. Or read Gregory Robinson's "Ships That Have Made History" and see how little we really know about the ships of Columbus' fleet, for instance. After discussing the dimensions, quite problematical, and the sail plans, he says:

"It seems that the *Pinta* was square-rigged, certainly on the foremast, before she left Palos, and that the *Niña* was converted at the Canaries, but details are scanty and the wise artist will (for the present) put both the smaller ships out of sight and the flagship hull down, for the arrangement of the *Santa Maria's* upper works is none too sure." He adds: "No one, I hope, will endeavor to construct an expensive model on the figures I have given; I am sure they need correction by a committee consisting of a practical seaman, a naval architect, a ship-owner, a stevedore, and perhaps a schoolmaster."

And the *Mayflower* is almost as bad, although a hundred and thirty years later. So, you can see what you're up against. Most models of early ships are built largely by guesswork, both hull and rigging.

Why not confine your efforts to ships of which you can get fairly accurate plans—and even the deck layouts of the ships of the middle of the last century are not all recorded—and build models of American vessels. Take a look at "The History of American Sailing Ships" by H. I. Chapelle or the same author's "The Baltimore Clipper" and see what a wealth of models you could build from his pages.

If I can help you further, do not hesitate to call on me.

THE sea gives up a tough customer.

Request:—"Ask Adventure" seems to be a last resort, as an effort at the N. Y. Public Library failed to disclose adequate information. My questions are:

1. Is the flesh of the porpoise edible?
2. If so, where is it eaten and by whom?
3. What is the color of the meat? Does it resemble beef, pork, or what?
4. Is it tough, tender, and what does it taste like?
5. How is it prepared and cooked?
6. Was it ever used as an article of diet on the old sailing ships?
7. Is there such a substance as "porpoise milk"? Has it food value for human consumption and what is it like?

Any additional facts relative to the edibility of the porpoise will be appreciated.

—Joseph Hughes, New York, N. Y.

Reply by Mr. C. Blackburn Miller:—I am fully cognizant of the responsibility placed on *Adventure* in dispensing information that cannot be obtained in the exhaustive archives of the New York Public Library.

The flesh of the porpoise cannot be called edible in its natural form as it is intensely oily and of a coarse grain. It resembles beef and is of a deep red color. It is said to be tough and fibrous.

I knew several seafaring gentlemen who were on a strict diet prescribed by necessity, and they harpooned a porpoise. They tried boiling, roasting and soaking it in soda and water but it, according to their description, defied their efforts and they finally threw it overboard.

Aside from this one instance I have never heard that it was used as an article of food on the sailing ships nor have I ever heard of its being eaten even by natives.

Inasmuch as the porpoise is a mammal, it naturally has milk, but I cannot speak for its worth as an article of human diet. It might possibly have value along this line, though I imagine that it would be difficult to obtain it in sufficient quantities to make the effort worthwhile!

WHEN sword-play meant weight lifting.

Request:—I am much interested in arms and armor, but material on it seems scarce. Could you give me some references?

One point in particular troubles me. It is the subject of weight. All the books I have found give the length of swords, lances, etc. I am in a military school and know what it means to mount carrying a weight.

The objects I most desire data on are holbents, poleaxe, mace, two handed sword, cross-bows, and pikes.

Can you tell me the weight of a hauberk,

full suit of mail, and full suit of plate?

—Joe McConnell, Bryan, Texas

Reply by Captain R. E. Gardner:—The weight of various arms and armor mentioned in your letter follows:

Suit, Gothic armor, dated 1492, 40 pounds.

Suit, jousting armor, circa. 1510, 90 pounds.

Chain, complete, 27.5 pounds.

Tilting lance, circa. 1510, length 15.7 ft.; weight 39.2 pounds.

Two-handed swords, 1550-1570, average length 63 inches; weight 7.8 pounds.

Bastard or hand and a half swords, 16th century, average length 44 in.; average weight 12 pounds.

Early cross-hilted swords, IX-XIV century, average length 36.5 inches; average weight 2.25 pounds.

Rapiers, 1550-1660, average weight 2.4 pounds; average length 44 inches.

Small or court swords, 1625-1780, average weight 1 pound; average length 38 inches.

I would suggest that you inquire at your local library for the following standard works:

"A Record of European Armor and Arms Through Seven Centuries," Laking.

"Arms and Armor, British and Foreign," Ashdown.

"Spanish Arms and Armor," Calvert.

"The Sword Thru the Centuries," Hutton.

YOU'D better get a return ticket from that Island paradise.

Request:—In a few months I will retire on a pension of around fifty dollars a month. Would I find that sufficient to live on in the Virgin Islands? I'd rather work if there is any work for a white man to do. What is your opinion of this? Can you advise me on some other island in your vicinity?

A. P., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Reply by Mr. John B. Leffingwell:—Two-thirds of the letters I receive are from people with this urge for a tropical island life. First, I would not select the Virgin Islands as a place of residence. They are very much over populated (25,000 inhabitants to 133 square miles) and this population is eighty percent black. Rain water is the only source of drinking water. Agriculture is unsuccessful as a whole, due to exhausted soil and little water supply. There is practically no work and nearly all the inhabitants rely on P. W. A. or other Government enterprise. These islands have been classed as the nation's poor house. You could live there on fifty dollars a month, ekeing it out by fishing and raising some of your own food, but you would have to look forward to the regular hurricane dangers and contend with insects galore.

Practically all the Cuban islands are government owned, and Americans aren't welcome just now. Haiti has some good islands on the northeast coast, but things are politically very unsettled there,—and all together I wouldn't advise anyone to pursue the tropical island dream in the Caribbean just now.

Sorry to be so discouraging, but that's how I see it.

A COLLECTOR'S item—the noble end to a noble's sword.

Request:—We have in our family a German sword. The blade length is twenty-five inches. I am enclosing impressions taken from the left and right sides of the sword near where the hand protector starts. The printing is "Regiment from Boffner 1741," on the hand guard is the initials "G. A." or "C. A." or "G. T." Under this is No. 70.

Will you please advise me what this printing, etc., means on this sword?

Harold C. Duebner, Manitowoc, Wis.

Reply by Capt. R. E. Gardner:—You possess a fine and very interesting horseman's broadsword of the troubled times of the Austrian Succession, (1740-48). The Emperor Charles VI, Holy Roman Empire, died in 1740 and trouble began popping in the autumn of the same year.

Your sword bears a crown surmounted with the orb of the Holy Roman Empire and was probably fabricated for a horseman mustered by one of the lesser nobles. I am of the opinion that the horse depicted is the crest of the house which raised these troops, probably the von Boffner family.

This is a very desirable collector's item.

A LIZARD, poisonously colored—but not poison.

Request:—Down here in South Virginia there is a lizard that the colored folks call a scorpion. They also say that its bite is fatal.

The scorpion has longitudinal tan and yellow stripes alternating on its back. The underside is a sort of light bluish green.

Can you tell me anything about this lizard, especially as relates to any poisonous characteristics.

The peculiar color of the under side seems to indicate something unusual about it.

S. H. Evans, South Boston, Va.

Reply by Mr. Clifford H. Pope:—The lizard that you hear called "scorpion" is almost certainly the six-lined race runner, a variety

generally distributed over the United States westward into Texas and Colorado. It is absent from extreme northern and the north Atlantic states.

The six-lined race runner is harmless and inoffensive. It prefers dry, open situations with sandy soil and feeds on insects, spiders and snails. It lays some four or five eggs in the ground. These lizards are strictly terrestrial, fast running reptiles.

I have never heard scorpion applied to this species. In Georgia, the Negroes call the blue-tailed skink by that name.

Lizards are not poisonous animals. Only two of the many hundreds of known species are poisonous. These are the Gila monster and the related Mexican beaded lizard.

MINK trimming without benefit of furrier.

Request:—My wife, two children and myself are alone up here during the winter, and while not by any means a trapper, I have managed to catch a couple of mink, which I wish to use as trimmings for the childrens' clothing.

The advice I seek, is how to cure the skins.

I shall be grateful indeed, if you can furnish me with this information, because after a protracted spell of hard luck, it seems a good chance to make something snug for the kiddies, without too much expense.

G. B., Knight Inlet, B. C., Can.

Reply by Mr. Raymond S. Spears:—There are many cures for furs. The simplest is probably to take about six ounces of alum, six of common salt, a few ounces of borax dissolved in hot water. Cool and soak the skins in the mixture (say three quarts of water). Stir the skins every once in a while, and wash the skins in plain water and work them dry in your hands—wringing and twisting them makes them soft. Work a little castor oil into the places that don't soften up. This is all there is to it.

Another way is to knead, or work, the brains of the animal, or of any animal, into the flesh side of the skin, with a little alum and salt. Alum sets the fur against shedding. Salt cures it. Borax kills any decay and helps kill odors. Cedar, balsam, pine boughs kill scent, too. But look out for gum or pitch getting into the hair. If it does, though wood alcohol will usually cut it out.

If the skins are greasy, wash out in gasoline and dry in the wind. Gasoline cuts the fat and oil out.

DID you know about the blonde Africans?

Request:—I have heard of a community, somewhere in the interior of Algeria, which is evidently composed entirely of blonde women. They are said to be very beautiful and to hold the surrounding territory in fear. Do you know anything about this tribe?

J. Bud. Kenrad, Pomona, Cal.

Reply by Captain H. W. Eades:—I have looked up my files and find that a year or two ago two Frenchmen, named Coche and Frison, are reported to have started out on a hunt to find a mysterious race of blond sirens in Northern Africa. I have no reports as to the results of their journey.

There is nothing incredible in the existence of blonde women in North Africa—the Berbers, Touregs, and Kabyles often have blue eyes and blond or reddish hair and are said to be descended from Vandal or German tribes who migrated into Africa over a thousand years ago—but it is likely that the attractiveness of these ladies has been exaggerated in the telling of the story. Natives state that the reputed blonde beauties live on Gara Ti Dhamoum Mountain in the Hoggar Range of Algeria. The people of the surrounding country are Touaregs and the sirens are supposed to be related to them. They are said to live in beautiful gardens high up on the mountain, preferred because of the seclusion afforded, and the clear and cool atmosphere of which probably accounts for the reputed blondness of their skins. The local natives will not approach the peak, fearing to be bewitched by these unusual ladies, and lose their lives, or at least their liberty. I cannot vouch for the truth of this yarn, but it is not improbable.

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SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure*.

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure*.

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Boxing—CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH, 113 W. 57th St., N. Y. C.

Canoeing: *paddling, sailing, cruising, regattas*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 603 Brainard Av., Libertyville, Ill.

Coins: *and Medals*—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., N. Y. C.

Dogs—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care of *Adventure*.

Fencing—CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH, 113 W. 57th St., N. Y. C.

First Aid—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure*.

Fishing: *fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait; camping outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN B. THOMPSON, (Ozark Ripley), care of *Adventure*.

Fishing: *salt water; bottom fishing, surf casting, trolling; equipment and locations.* C. BLACKBURN MILLER, care of *Adventure*.

Football—JOHN B. FOSTER, care of *Adventure*.

Globe-trotting and vagabonding—ROBERT SPIERS-BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure*.

Health Building Activities, Hiking—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure*.

Horses: *care, training of horses in general; jumping; and polo; the cavalry arm*—MAJOR R. ERNEST DUPUY, care of *Adventure*.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motor Camping and Trailer Camping—MAJOR CHAS. G. PERCIVAL, M.D., 152 W. 65th St., N. Y. C.

Motorcycling—*regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, 161 Ferguson Av., Burlington, Vt.

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 1632 So. Hayworth Av., Los Angeles, Calif.

Old-Time Sailoring—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. No 3, Box 69, Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns:*foreign and American makes; wing shooting*—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care of *Adventure*.

★**Skiing and Snowshoeing**—W. H. PRICE, 3436 Mance St., Montreal, Quebec.

Small Boating: *skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Stamps—DR. H. A. DAVIS, The American Philatelic Society, 3421 Colfax Av., Denver, Colo.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y. C.

Swords: *spears, pole arms and armor*—CAPT. R. E. GARDNER, 980 Northwest Blvd., Columbus, Ohio.

Tournament Fly and Bait Casting—H. B. STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—CHARLES B. CRANFORD, County Office Bldg., Recreation Comm., White Plains, N. Y.

Yachting—A. R. KNAUER, 2722 E. 75th Pl., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American; north of the Panama Canal; customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Automobiles and Aircraft Engines: *design, operation and maintenance*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure*.

Aviation: *airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachutes, gliders*—MAJOR FALK HARMEL, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

Big Game Hunting: *guides and equipment*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Entomology: *insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Pa.

Forestry: *in the United States; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Tropical Forestry: *tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, Chapel Hill, N. C.

Herpetology: *reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure*.

Marine Architecture: *ship modeling*—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Av., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Merchant Marine: GORDON R. MAC ALLISTER, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Motor Vehicles: *operation, legislative restrictions and traffic*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure*.

Ornithology: *birds; their habits and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 3508 Kings College Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *outfitting, work in out-of-the-way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Precious and semi-precious stones: *cutting and polishing of gem materials; technical information*—F. J. ESTERLIN, 901-902 Shreve Bldg., 210 Post Road, San Francisco, Calif.

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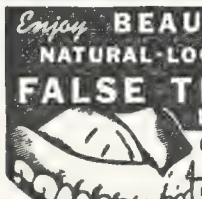

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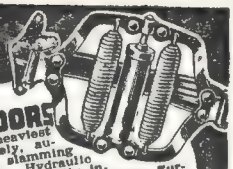

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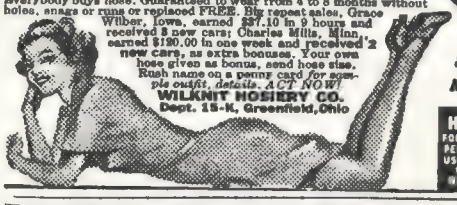

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8.25-17		2.90	1.35
28x5.25-18		2.90	1.35
29x5.25-19		2.95	1.35
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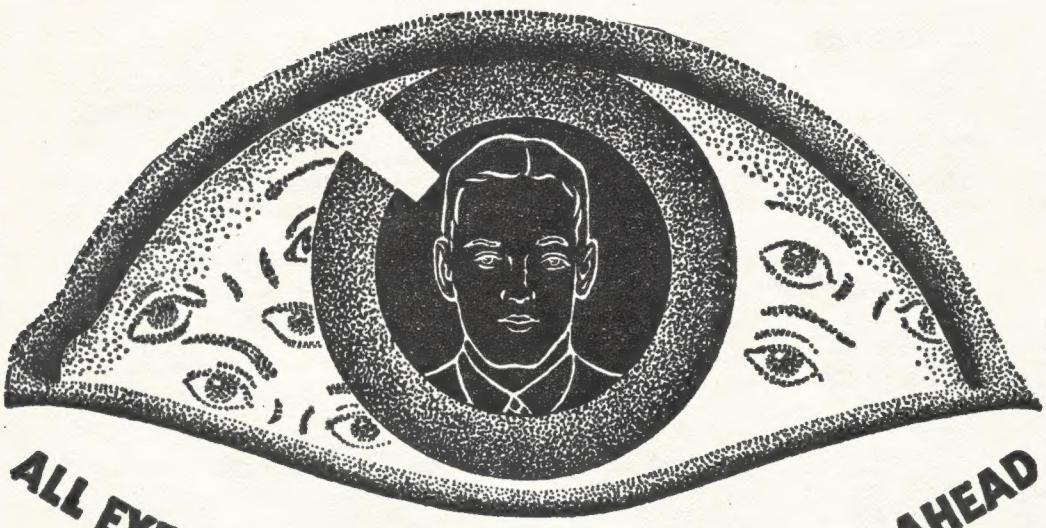

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☐ Contractor and Builder	☐ Telephone Work ☐ Radio	☐ Air Conditioning and Cooling	☐ Chemistry ☐ Pharmacy
☐ Structural Draftsman	☐ Mechanical Engineering	☐ Steam Engineer	☐ Coal Mining
☐ Structural Engineer	☐ Mechanical Draftsman	☐ Steam Electric Engineer	☐ Mine Foreman ☐ Fire Bosses
☐ Management of Inventions	☐ Machinist ☐ Toolmaker	☐ Marine Engineer	☐ Navigation
☐ Electrical Engineer	☐ Patternmaker	☐ R. R. Locomotives	☐ Cotton Manufacturing
☐ Electric Lighting	☐ Diesel Engines	☐ R. R. Section Foreman	☐ Woolen Manufacturing
☐ Welding, Electric and Gas	☐ Aviation Engines	☐ Air Brakes ☐ R. R. Signalmen	☐ Agriculture
☐ Reading Shop Blueprints	☐ Auto Technician	☐ Highway Engineering	☐ Fruit Growing
☐ Heat Treatment of Metals	☐ Auto Electrical Technician	☐ Civil Engineering	☐ Poultry Farming

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

☐ Business Management	☐ Bookkeeping	☐ Service Station Salesmanship	☐ Grade School Subjects
☐ Industrial Management	☐ Secretarial Work	☐ First Year College Subjects	☐ High School Subjects
☐ Traffic Management	☐ Spanish	☐ Business Correspondence	☐ College Preparatory
☐ Accountancy	☐ French	☐ Stenography and Typing	☐ Illustrating
☐ Cost Accountant	☐ Salesmanship	☐ Civil Service ☐ Mail Carrier	☐ Cartooning
☐ C. P. Accountant	☐ Advertising	☐ Railway Mail Clerk	☐ Lettering Show Cards ☐ Signs

DOMESTIC SCIENCE COURSES

☐ Home Dressmaking	☐ Advanced Dressmaking	☐ Foods and Cookery
☐ Professional Dressmaking and Designing		☐ Tea Room and Cafeteria Management, Catering

Name.....*Age*.....*Address*.....

City.....*State*.....*Present Position*.....

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GET MY FREE BOOK

Write your name and address carefully on the coupon below. I'll send you, absolutely free, a copy of my new book, *"Everlasting Health and Strength."* It reveals the secrets that changed me from a 97-pound flat-chested weakling into a husky fellow who twice won the title of "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man" against all comers! And it shows how I can build you into an *"Atlas Champion"* the same way.

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I'll add pounds of muscles where they are needed! Are you fat in spots? I'll show you how to pare down to fighting trim.

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I haven't any need for contraptions that may strain your heart and other vital organs. I don't dose you or doctor you. *Dynamic Tension* is all I need. It's my natural tested method for developing real men inside and out. It distributes added pounds of powerful muscles over your body, gets rid of surplus fat, and gives you the vitality, strength and pep, that win you the admiration of every woman and the respect of any man.

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NOTE! This is the latest photo of Charles Atlas showing how he looks today. This is not a studio picture but an actual untouched snap-shot.

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This valuable cup, made of solid sterling silver stands about 14 inches high on a black mahogany base. I will award it to my pupil who makes the most improvement in his development within the next three months.

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It tells you all about my **Dynamic Tension** method, and how it has made big muscled men out of run-down specimens. It shows you, from actual photos, how I have developed my pupils to the same perfectly balanced proportions of my own physique. What my system **did** for me and hundreds of others it can **do** for you too. Don't keep on being only half the man you CAN be! Find out what I can do for you.

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THRILLS from the CIRCUS

FEATURING
ANTOINETTE CONCELLO
TRAPEZE SENSATION
AND
TERRELL JACOBS
LION KING

MISS CONCELLO, HOW ARE CHANCES FOR A STORY ON YOUR BIGGEST THRILL AS AN AERIALIST?

TONY, TELL HIM ABOUT YOUR FIRST TRIPLE SOMERSAULT IN THE AIR

"NO WOMAN, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, HAD EVER EXECUTED A TRIPLE MID-AIR SOMERSAULT. I HAD TO DEPEND ALMOST ENTIRELY ON AUTOMATIC TIMING..."

"...BUT AS I WHIRLED OFF INTO SPACE... ONCE...TWICE...FOR A SPLIT-SECOND I PRACTICALLY LOST CONSCIOUSNESS..."

"...THREE TIMES...AND...I MADE IT! THRILLED AND SAFE!"

TERRELL, TELL HIM ABOUT THE TIME SPARKY, OVER THERE, ALMOST FINISHED YOU

"I HAD ALMOST COMPLETED MY ACT WITH 25 LIONS, WHEN SPARKY AND ANOTHER MALE WENT FOR EACH OTHER..."

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"TRYING TO BREAK IT UP, I WAS KNOCKED DOWN AND SPARKY TURNED ON ME. THINGS LOOKED PRETTY BAD..."

"BUT I GOT THE UPPER HAND. BEFORE I LEFT THE CAGE, EVERY LION WAS BACK IN PLACE."

AFTER A TURN IN THE BIG CAGE, I NEED A 'LIFT' IN ENERGY, AND I GET IT FROM A CAMEL. I'VE SMOKED CAMELS FOR 16 YEARS. HAVE ONE, TONY?

YOU BET, TERRELL, THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CAMELS AND OTHER KINDS - IN MILDNESS - IN SO MANY WAYS!

One Smoker tells another...

"CAMELS AGREE WITH ME"

PEOPLE **DO** APPRECIATE THE **COSTLIER TOBACCOS** IN CAMELS

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CAMELS ARE A MATCHLESS BLEND OF **FINER, MORE EXPENSIVE** TOBACCOS—TURKISH & DOMESTIC

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